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THE CHRISTIAN

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SERMONS

ON THE

HEIDELBERGH CATECHISM.

WHEREIN THE DOCTRINE OF FAITH, RECEIVED IN THE REFORMED CHURCH, IS DEFENDED AGAINST THE PRINCIPAL OPPONENTS, AND THE PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT AND DIRECTION OF IT TO EVANGELICAL PIETY, ENFORCED.

BY THE REV. JOHN VANDERKEMP,
Late Minister of the Gospel, in the Church of Dirksland, Holland.

TRANSLATED FROM THE DUTCH
BY THE REV. JOHN M. VAN HARLINGEN.

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THE

WORKING AND CONFIRMATION

OF

FAITH.

XXV. LORD'S DAY.

Rom. iv. 11. He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith.

Q. 65. *Since then we are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits by faith only, whence doth this faith proceed?*

A. From the Holy Ghost, who works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments.

Q. 66. *What are the sacraments?*

A. The sacraments are holy visible signs and seals, appointed of God for this end, that by the use thereof he may the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel; to wit, that he grants us freely the remission of sins, and life eternal, for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross.

Q. 67. *Are both word and sacraments then ordained and appointed for this end, that they may direct our faith to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, as the ground of our salvation.*

A. Yes indeed; for the Holy Ghost teaches us in the gospel, and

assures us by the sacraments, that the whole of our salvation depends upon that one sacrifice of Christ, which he offered for us on the cross.

Q. 68. *How many sacraments hath Christ instituted in the new covenant or testament?*

A. Two, namely, holy baptism, and the holy supper.

IN order to know the value and excellence of any curious work, we must not only attend to its proper form, but must also inquire concerning the workman of it; for a reputable workman renders his work reputable, since we cannot look upon that, which hath been made by a great artificer, to be a bungling work; therefore great workmasters will usually stamp their mark on their work, that they may render it the more reputable. The heathens seeing the shining heaven, and the well adorned earth, with their various forms, were urged of their own accord to inquire after the great Workmaster of the universe, which beamed so in their eyes, "if haply they might feel after him and find him," as the apostle speaks to the Athenians, Acts xxvii. 27. Neither were their endeavours altogether in vain: as the great Worker had stamped the mark of "his eternal power and Godhead" on his work, "they understood and saw clearly his invisible things," according to Rom. i. 20. Paul, desirous of displaying the excellence of the third heaven, leads us up to "God, the Maker and Builder of it," Heb. xi. 16. What renders all the benefits of the covenant of grace glorious? is it not that the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, is the author of them? This caused Paul, when he considered all those graces, to end, rest, and lose himself in the Lord, so that he was obliged to cry out "Of him, and through him, and to him are all things," Rom. xi. 36. Is it not thus also with the faith of Christians? must we not inquire concerning the Author of it, in order to know the value of it? Verily the great apostle of the Gentiles shows us the worthiness of faith from the Author of it, when he teacheth that faith and all the graces which accompany it, "are things that are given to us of God," 1 Cor. ii. 12. The instructor doth not pursue a different method; for having exhibited precious faith with respect to the great necessity, operative nature, comprehensive object and glorious advantage of it, to wit, "that it renders us partakers of Christ and all his benefits," he inquires also concerning the author of it, that he may magnify the value of it to the utmost, asking in the sixty fifth question, "whence doth this faith proceed," and teaching us that the

great Author of it is the Holy Ghost, who works and confirms it. Two general heads are exhibited for our consideration in this Lord's day.

I. How faith is wrought by the Holy Ghost.

II. How it is confirmed by him.

I. With respect to the first general head, the instructor saith, (a) that faith proceeds from the Holy Ghost, (b) that the mean by which it is wrought is the preaching of the gospel, and (c) that the Holy Ghost works it thereby in our hearts.

Faith proceeds indeed from God the Father, "being the gift of God," Eph. ii. 8. Therefore the Saviour saith, John vi. 44, "No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him." It is also the work of the Son, to whom, "the apostles prayed for an increase of faith," Luke vii. 5. And it is also ascribed to the Holy Ghost, for he is "the Spirit of faith," 2 Cor. iv. 13. We see this likewise, 1 Cor. xii. 3, 9. Gal. v. 22. The outward works are indeed common to the three Persons, but so that the Father works through the Son, and through the Holy Ghost; and that, according to the distribution of the work of grace among the divine Persons, creation is ascribed to the Father, redemption to the Son, and sanctification to the Holy Ghost. The Father foreordained all grace for the elect, the Son purchased it, and the Holy Ghost applies and dispenseth it to the favourites of God. As faith is the first grace which is communicated and applied, therefore faith is attributed to the Holy Ghost.

Although the Holy Ghost alone works faith, he doth not nevertheless work it immediately, as enthusiasts fancy, but by reasonable means, for the Holy Ghost works in a reasonable manner with reasonable men. The mean which the Holy Ghost uses is not the light of nature, either innate, or acquired by a contemplation of the creatures, as the Socinians persuade themselves; for that light can indeed discover to us "God's eternal power and Godhead, that we may be without excuse," Rom i. 20, but it cannot reveal Christ to us, nor lead us up to him. For the Gentiles, who had no more than this natural light, "were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world," Eph. ii 12. The Holy Ghost makes use of the word only as a mean to work faith: it is indeed true, that a person may be brought to faith by reading the word, but the Holy Ghost makes use of the preaching of the word: "Faith cometh by hearing," saith Paul, Rom. x. 17. "The Holy Ghost fell on all them who heard the word" in the house of Corne-

lius, Acts x. 44. When the Holy Ghost would work faith in the Ethiopian, he did not only direct him to read the word, but he also ordered it to be preached to him by Philip, Acts xiii. 28—42. Although the Lord could work faith by himself without the instrumentality of men, it nevertheless pleaseth him to "save them who believe by the foolishness of preaching," 1 Cor. i. 22. When the Lord Jesus would bring Paul to the faith, he called to him indeed out of heaven, and smote him to the ground, so that Paul, who was yet called Saul, asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Yet he doth not instruct him in the faith himself, but saith, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do;" and he sends Ananias to him, who preaches the word to him, Acts ix. 3—18. The Holy Ghost could have wrought faith in the Ethiopian immediately; but he would do it by Philip, Acts viii. 28—40. We might think that the angels were better qualified to bring men to the faith by the word; but the admirable wisdom and goodness of God, would rather, for many reasons, which we shall not mention at present, do this "by men, who have infirmity," as "the law" also formerly "made such high priests," Heb. vii. 28. God sent an angel indeed to Cornelius the centurion, yet not to preach the word to him, but to direct him to Peter, "who should tell him what he ought to do, and of whom he should hear the words of salvation," Acts x. 1—48. For God alone will have the honour, and will exalt his grace so much the more, as the instrument, by which he conveys it to the sinner, is ignoble, unworthy and unqualified in itself. Therefore Paul saith, "We have this treasure in earthern vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us," 2 Cor. iv. 7. But it is not the word of the law by which faith is wrought; that can indeed discover a man's sins to him, and condemn him; but the law doth not discover the way of faith to him. The Holy Ghost make use indeed of the law to convince man of his forlorn condition, John xvi. 8, but the gospel is the only capable mean of working faith; therefore Paul asked the Galatians "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Gal. iii. 2. "The gospel is the power of God to salvation," Rom. i. 16, and "the ministration of the Spirit," 2 Cor. iii. 8. The object of faith, God in Christ, is depicted in the gospel in all its lustre, and in the fairest colours, that the sinner may be enamoured of it, and allured by it to embrace it in faith; it is therefore called "the gospel of the glory of Christ, by which God shines into the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." See 2 Cor. iv. 4, 6. Gal. iii, 1. Yea, the gospel is

the voice of the Lord, whereby he invites and calls sinners to turn to him in faith, and to be saved, and by which all desirable grace is made known and offered to them, that they may appropriate that grace to themselves by faith. See Isaiah xlv. 22. Luke ii. 10, 11.

"The Holy Ghost works faith in our hearts by this gospel," saith the instructor. But how? It is certain that "faith is the gift of God, and that it is given of grace to believe in Christ," according to the words of the apostle, Eph. ii. 8. Phil. i. 29. But it is not so evident to all what this grace is, and how the Holy Ghost works faith in our hearts thereby. The orthodox say, according to the word of God, that the Holy Ghost infuseth faith operatively and effectually, by an almighty and irresistible power, into the heart, by which it believes and is converted: but the ancient Pelagians, whose opinion, condemned of old, hath been again fetched up from the pit of hell by the Socinians, said that the work of God in this matter was only an outward work, consisting merely in creating man a rational creature, endued with a freewill, by which he is able of himself to believe, and that no inward gift of the Holy Ghost was at all necessary, in order that he might believe. This was considered by the Semipelagians, as too harsh: they thought that we ought to ascribe something to grace, as well as to nature: grace and freewill, work together, grace assists our will, and our will assists grace, they resemble two horses, which draw one carriage. This opinion hath often been condemned by the church, according to the word of God, but it hath been again revived by the Remonstrants, who have also endeavoured to force it upon the church. In order to conceal themselves under specious pretences, they spoke at first very highly of grace, yea, said that man could not believe of himself but only by grace; but when they were examined more strictly, and urged to declare what this working grace was, they showed that they understood nothing else by it but the light of nature, and the remains of the divine image in man, and also the preaching of the gospel, which hath an inward operative power; whereby the understanding is enlightened, and which knocks at the door of the heart, and persuades the will in a moral manner to believe; the whole power of the grace of God will consist then herein, that man is able to believe; but that he actually believes proceeds from the natural power of freewill: they will not allow that God the Lord works and infuses faith into the hearts of men effectually and irresistibly, and thus overcomes and destroys the resistance of the sinful will, and renders the unwilling sinner willing.

We see therefore that they join and blend in a shameful manner, the grace of God and the powers of man, call nature grace, and grace

nature, leave nothing for the Holy Spirit to do, in order to work faith internally in the heart; all their fair speeches concerning grace are only a great outcry about nothing: and when the scripture saith that faith is the gift of God, given of grace, they will utter words without a meaning. But the word of God, which we revere, speaks of an effectually working power of the Holy Ghost, which produceth faith in the hearts of the elect effectually, when it saith that God enlighteneth the understanding, as he enlightened the world in the first creation: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 6. The Lord renders the unwilling will willing, giving another heart and another spirit, as he promiseth, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. "A new heart will I give you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." And thus he works, as Paul saith, Eph. i. 19, 20, "with the exceeding greatness of his power in us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." What is the working of faith, but a new birth, a creation, and a raising from the dead? Verily the word of God calls it so, Titus iii. 5. Eph. ii 5—10. But is not a person born, created and raised from the dead effectually and irresistably? What should a sinner indeed do by his free-will to effect faith in himself? is he not a slave, a servant of sin, and entirely impotent? We have shown this upon the eighth and ninth questions.

"Did the Jews resist the Holy Spirit?" Acts vii. 51, it was not the Spirit of faith, working faith in their hearts, but the Spirit who wrought in Stephen, and enabled him to speak with power, whom they resisted, as the fathers of the Jews had resisted the prophets, according to ver. 52. Let us admit that they resisted the Spirit, who wrought in their hearts, they nevertheless did not resist the Spirit, who wrought in them, that they might believe, but who wrought in them that he might convince and condemn them, as the Spirit of the Lord strove with the inhabitants of the old world, Gen. vi. 3.

They discover their ignorance concerning the working of the Holy Ghost in effecting faith, when they say, that the will doth not then continue free, but suffers compulsion; for the Holy Ghost works in man agreeably to his rational nature, enabling him to behold his misery, and the beauty of the Son of God, by which, being sweetly drawn, he runs after the Lord, and even cries to him, "Turn me, and I shall be turned," as the church doth, Jer. xxxi. 18. Lam. v. 21.

We will consider this somewhat more particularly. The Holy Ghost works faith in all the elect indeed effectually, nevertheless in a different manner and order in different persons. In some by a judicious contemplation of the truth of the gospel, by which a new light ariseth in them, whereby they contemplate it with singleness, so that their minds are captivated by it, and rendered willing to embrace it as an acceptable truth, and also the Mediator exhibited therein, and to surrender themselves unto him. So it fared with Lydia, Acts xvi. 14. "Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things which were spoken by Paul." They hear Jesus say to them, "Follow me," and they experience a sweet, but powerful drawing, that induces them to follow willingly, which was the case of Matthew, according to his own account, Matt. ix. 9. This is effected with great tranquility: but Jesus embraceth and overwhelms others in an exceedingly unexpected manner with his preventing love, which transports their souls as it were out of themselves, and fills them with so much joy, that they cannot contain themselves, but are constrained to receive him within themselves, to accept of him, and to surrender themselves wholly to him. In this manner was faith wrought in Zaccheus; for when Jesus said to him, "Make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house," he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully:" and his faith became forthwith active in works of charity, Luke xix. 1—9. There are others in whose hearts faith is wrought from their youth, as we may see in Obadiah, the steward of Ahab, 1 Kings xviii. 18, in John the Baptist, and others: all these obtain faith without any remarkable conviction of their sins, and of their damnable condition: children certainly are not convinced of sin, but faith is infused into them, before they attain to the use of reason: but those who are persuaded by a calm contemplation of the truth, or by the power of the love of Christ, see indeed that they are miserable in themselves, but they are not long exercised in this manner; for their view of their misery is presently swallowed up; but they are afterwards led so much the more into the valley of humiliation, and are daily convinced of their sinfulness and of their punishableness, in order to humble them.

The Holy Ghost doth not observe this manner and order of working faith with all the elect; but his ordinary method with the most of them is to convince them of their sinful and damnable condition; for the Holy Ghost "convinceth of sin," John xvi. 8. He darts his light into the soul, by which she is stopped short in her sinful career, is induced to attend to herself, and sees her abominable state, and

her alienation from God and from his blessed favour; this confounds and afflicts her, and "she saith, What have I done," Jer viii. 6. She thinks, what shall I do: she will reform, and will not sin so any more: she earnestly endeavours to forsake sin, and attends diligently on many ordinances: but the Holy Spirit discovereth to her again and again the sinfulness of her conduct, by which she becomes so distressed, that she cries out, "There is no hope," Isaiah lvii. 10. As she is not willing to perish, she reads the scripture, seeks good books, and asks an understanding person or preacher, "What she must do?" Acts ii. 37. xvi. 30. She is advised to believe in Christ: but she hath such an obscure knowledge of Christ and of faith, that she knows not how to conduct with respect to this matter, until the Holy Ghost discovers to her by his own light the Lord Jesus in his fulness and ability to save her perfectly, 2 Cor. iv. 6. This gives her some hope, and quickens her desire, but doth not afford her a perfect relief, because she knows not yet whether he will save her, since she is so vile. She now betakes herself to prayer, that he may behold her in his kindness; but the poor wavering soul doth not find that he turns to her. The Holy Ghost, designing to work effectually, assures and persuades her that Jesus calls and invites her in his word, and he convinces her of the truth of it, "the Spirit bearing witness, that the Spirit is the truth," 1 John v. 6. And he thus works an historical faith, by which the soul experienceth, that "the gospel doth not come to her in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance," 1 Thess. i. 5. And therefore it is not to her, "as the word of man, but as the word of God, which also worketh in her," 1 Thess. ii. 13. This affords her enlargement, she flees, with a certain confidence that she will be accepted, to this Saviour, who is so precious to her, embraces him, and receives him: for the Holy Ghost inclines her effectually to consent to him heartily, and with a full determination of her will, in order to belong wholly to him, that he may sanctify and save her. And thus the Holy Spirit brings her into the bond of the covenant, according to his promise, Ezek. xx. 37.

What think ye, hearers, is this a forcing of the free-will, which cannot be forced, if it shall remain a will? Yes, it is a force that is agreeable to the nature of the will, which can endure such a force. O sweet force of love, which draws the soul with the cords of a man, with bands of love, Hosea xi. 4. As soon as she is touched, she cries out, "Draw me, we will run after thee," Song i. 4. "Turn me, and I shall be turned," Jer. xxxi. 28. Nothing is more grievous to her, than to find such a depraved unwillingness in herself: she

wishes that "the Lord would work in her both to will and to do of his good pleasure," Philip. ii. 13. Thus then the effectual working of God to produce faith in her doth not militate against her will.

II. As the Holy Ghost works faith, so he also confirms it. It doth not please him to work faith from the beginning in its greatest perfection, but rather to make it like "a grain of mustard seed, a bruised reed, and smoking flax," he doth not however leave it so small and weak, but he increases and confirms it, and causes it to "grow exceedingly," 2 Thess. i. 3. In order to illustrate this, we will explain, 1. What a strong and a weak faith is, 2. How the Holy Ghost confirms faith, 3. What means the Holy Ghost useth to confirm faith.

1. Faith is strong, (a) when it is able to believe and expect great, yea, almost incredible things. Abraham, though he and his wife were both old, durst nevertheless "believe that his seed should be like the stars for multitude," Gen. xv. 5, 6. The virgin Mary showed her great faith, when she believed that she should bear the Son of God, without knowing a man, Luke i. 38—45. See also Matt. viii. 8—10. But a weak faith looks upon great and unusual things, as impossible: Moses discovered a weak faith, when he smote the rock twice, as though it were impossible, that the dry and hard rock should afford water, Numb. xx. 10, 11, 12. Faith is strong, (b) when it can proceed upon the single word of God, without seeing, without signs, and without a probability, that such an event will come to pass. "Abraham, believed in hope against hope, that he should become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead," &c. Rom. iv. 18, 19, 20. But a weak faith will have sight, signs and probability, as we see in the priest Zacharias, in the Jews and in Thomas, Luke i. 18, 19. John iv. 48. xx. 25—29. It is a strong faith, (c) which assures itself of God's blessed favour, as the great faith of Paul did, 2 Tim. i. 12. This is "a full assurance of faith," Heb. x. 22, but faith is weak, when it suffers itself to be shaken, and cast down by the least conceit, or accident. Faith is strong, (d) when it is able to receive Christ actually and operatively, "can cause him to dwell in the heart," can lean on him affectionately, and can derive all grace from him for every need, and can exert a holy violence on him, with Jacob, in order to obtain a blessing, Gen. xxxii. 26. But faith is weak, when it can only desire, can stretch forth the hand, the power of the soul toward him, but cannot fetch him to her; there is, as it were, a weak breathing of the soul. Further, faith is strong, (e) when it can despise great shame, losses, honors, profits, and pleas-

ures, as far as they would detach the soul from her duty, that it may remain faithful to God only, with Moses, Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26,. But it is weak, when it becomes slack in its duty, on account of these outward things. Add to this, that faith is strong, (f) when it remains unaffrighted in great dangers, and can shelter itself with the Lord, like the faith of Moses and David, Psalm xxvii. 1—3. lvii. 1. Heb. xi. 27. But a weak faith trembles at the least appearance of danger, Jer. xii. 5. Matt. viii. 24, 25, 26. xiv. 29, 30, 31. Moreover (g) a strong faith is able to improve that which would be against it, and is discouraging, to its advantage and encouragement. This made the faith of the Canaanitish woman great, Matt. xv. 22—28. But a weak faith will abuse that which should encourage, to faint-heartedness. See this weak faith in Manoah, censured by his wife, Judges xiii. 22, 23. I must add also, (h) that a strong faith doth not stop at its unworthiness, but looks beyond it, yea, covers it with the worthiness of the Lord, as the faith of the centurion acted, Matt. viii. 8, 9, 10, while a weak faith dares neither believe, nor attempt any thing, on account of its unworthiness. Moses manifested repeatedly the weakness of his faith, when he endeavoured to excuse himself, on account of his meanness and incapacity, from being the ambassadour of the Lord to Pharaoh, Exod. iii. v. vi. Finally, (i) a strong faith looks through every temporal and visible object to those which are eternal and invisible, in order to encourage itself thereby in its course, according to 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. Heb. xi. 1. But to a weak faith future things appear exceedingly dark, and they seldom affect the soul with any abiding impression.

3. The Holy Ghost works this strong faith in the hearts of his people, not instantaneously, but progressively, as light, plants and men increase gradually. And he doth this, (a) by shedding a greater measure of light into the soul, in consequence of which Christ and all his mysteries are discovered to her more fully than before, and so "the path of the righteous becomes like a shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day," Prov. iv. 18. This Paul desired for the Ephesians, Eph. i. 16—19. (b) By convincing and assuring the minds of believers more of the divine truths, that they may in all that they do establish themselves upon them, by which they obtain "all riches of the full assurance of understanding," Coll. ii. 2. This is the work of the Holy Ghost, as John testifieth, 1 John v. 6. Moreover, the Holy Ghost confirms faith, (c) when he increases and renders the habitual life of faith more steadfast in the soul, whereby she is enabled to exercise faith with greater dexterity and ease, and is not so quickly shaken, "being rooted and built up

in Christ, established in the faith, and abounding therein," Coll. ii. 7. This is "being strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell by faith in the heart," Eph. ii. 16, 17. The Holy Ghost confirms faith also, (d) by an abundant and reviving shedding abroad of grace: he speaks to the heart, and affords a feeling sense of his love: Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost," saith Paul, Rom v. 5. Again, (e) The Holy Ghost confirms faith, when he supports the soul under her dejection on account of spiritual and temporal afflictions, either enabling her to look by his light through all her difficulties to a certain issue; or strengthening her, in order that she may sustain her adversity with courage, by which she therefore "glories in tribulation," Rom. v. 3, and "in her infirmaties, that the power of Christ may rest upon her," 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10, or discovering to her, that in all her distresses he is still with her, and that he comforts her wonderfully in her tribulation, and so she laughs at fear, saying with David, Psalm xxiii. 4. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Thus the Lord saith to his dejected people, Isaiah xli. 10. "Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Once more, (f) it sometimes happens to believers, that their ardor abates exceedingly, and that they forsake their first love, yea, that they are even hurried to a very grievous sin; which doth not indeed destroy their faith, but shakes it exceedingly, and causeth it to languish. But the Holy Ghost having begun a good work in them, and designing to finish it, raiseth them up again, and restores them to their former zeal. Thus David prayed after his grievous fall for "the renewing of a right spirit, and for the upholding of the free Spirit," Psalm li. 10, 12. Peter having been greatly shaken by his sin was converted and strengthened again, according to Luke xxii. 31, 32.

3. As the Holy Ghost doth not work faith without means, so he doth not confirm it neither without them. In order to show his marvellous skilfulness in confirming faith, he will sometimes employ means to confirm it, which are naturally calculated to weaken it. A tempestuous wind which threatens to destroy trees, serves to enroot them more firmly. The horrible blasphemies, which are sometimes injected into the soul by a messenger of Satan, threaten to extirpate faith: but the Holy Spirit uses them to establish it: "He thus perfects his strength in our weakness," 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8, 9.

Who can maintain his faith, when he is tormented by wicked men in the most dreadful manner, that they may compel him to deny it? Yet the Holy Ghost doth even by tribulation work patience, experience and hope," Rom. v. 3, 4. But the gospel is better calculated by its own nature to confirm faith: all the mysteries, promises and encouragements of the gospel are used by the Holy Ghost to confirm faith: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope, saith Paul, Rom. xv. 4. But the sacraments were more especially instituted, and are used by the Holy Ghost for the confirmation of our faith.

The word Sacrament is derived from the Latin word *sacrare*, to consecrate, or to dedicate. Thus the heathens called the money which two persons at law who had betted, laid up in the holy place, as a pledge, upon condition that he who should win the action, should receive his money again, and that the other should leave it there. And in this manner are the sacraments pledges of the faithfulness of God and of his covenant people. The military oath was also called anciently a sacrament: and thus also the use of the sacraments serves as a solemn engaging of ourselves to the Lord, to fight under his banner faithfully against all his enemies. This word was most probably introduced into the church by the vulgar Latin translation of the Bible, which renders the Greek word *musterion*, a mystery, sometimes by *sacramentum*, as the Latin fathers also called a mystery sometimes a sacrament: and truly the sacraments contain great and profound mysteries. The Papists have been guilty of a shameful abuse here, by taking occasion from this sense of the word, to multiply the sacraments beyond measure. I will not however on this account disapprove of using the word, because we know what we understand by it, and the church makes use of other words, which are not to be found in the bible. If we will be particular, we may make use of the language of the Holy Spirit, who calls the sacraments signs, seals, a covenant, and tokens of the covenant," Rom. iv. 11. Gen. xvii. 11, 13. Exod. xii. 13.

In order to contemplate the matter itself, we say that a sacrament is a visible sign, and seal of invisible grace." So "Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith," as Paul speaks in the text. The instructor, in order to explain this, teacheth us three things, 1, the nature of the sacraments, Q. 66. 2, The agreement of the word with the sacraments, Q. 67, and 3, The number of the sacraments, Q. 68,

1. To the nature of the sacraments pertains, 1, an outward and vi-

sible sign, 2, an invisible thing signified, 3, an union between the sign and the thing signified, 4, the foundation, or fundamental reason of that union, 5, an end of the institution and of the use of it.

1. "The sacraments," saith the instructor, "are holy, visible signs;" they are therefore calculated to signify and represent spiritual things, in order that we may, by using them, attain to a better understanding of spiritual things. It pleaseth the Lord to work in us by means of the outward senses, since we have not only a reasonable soul, but also a body: "Faith cometh by hearing," and the confirmation of it cometh by seeing; but not only the elements, but also the outward ceremonies, which accompany the elements, are signs; we will illustrate this more fully, when we treat upon baptism and the Lord's Supper. I leave it to others to show that signs are either natural, or instituted, either human or divine, as the sacraments are holy signs Not that the signs are holy by themselves, having grace and the thing signified in themselves, and communicating it thus; for God alone works the thing signified, and the signs can work only in a moral manner, and cannot convey grace to the soul by themselves. But they are holy signs by a divine institution signifying holy things, in order to render men holy by a holy use of them. Independent of this, the signs are neither holy nor profitable, as Paul teacheth with respect to circumcision, Rom. ii. 25, 29.

2. The thing signified by a sacrament is invisible grace: the instructor saith "the promise of the gospel, that God grants us freely the remission of sin, and life everlasting, for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross." This is called by Paul in one word, "the righteousness of faith," Rom. iv. 11. We may also say that the great covenant of grace, with all its sure benefits, is the thing signified by the sacraments, and is therefore called "the covenant of God." Gen. xvii. 11, 13. Since now the sacraments differ one from another, therefore the benefits of the covenant of grace are also proposed to us in different relations as will appear in the sequel.

3. But what relation hath the sign to the thing signified, unless there be an union of the sign with the thing signified? this sacramental union consists in the relation which the sign hath to the thing signified, by which (a) there is a resemblance, and an agreement between the outward and material element and grace, by which the sign exhibits and expresseth the thing signified in a lively manner. (b) This sacramental union and relation consists also in the conjunc- of the sign with the thing signified by and in the use of them both.

We use and receive the sign with our outward senses, and the assurance that we partake of the thing signified, with our understanding and will, through faith, and the operation of the Holy Ghost.

That such an union belongs to the sacraments, we learn from four kinds of sacramental phrases, usual in the word of God, by which, (a) the name of the thing signified is given to the sign. Circumcision, "the sign of the covenant," is called "the covenant" itself, Gen. xviii. ii. 13. See also Exod. xii. 11. Matt. xxvi. 26, 27, 28. (b) The name of the sign is given to the thing signified; thus, Christ is called "our passover," 1 Cor. v. 7. (c) The properties and effects of the thing signified are ascribed to the sign; so baptism is called "the washing away of sin," and "the washing of regeneration," Acts xxii. 16. Eph. v 26. Titus iii. 5. And (d) the properties and effects of the sign are attributed to the thing signified: when Christ broke the bread, he said, "this is my body, which is broken for you," 1 Cor. xi. 24.

4. We find many similitudes in the word of God, in which spiritual things are expressed by material; Christ is called a vine, a branch, a door; we can also spiritualize many material things, and ascend up by them to spiritual things; but they are not therefore sacraments, and the conjuction of a material, with a spiritual thing doth not of itself constitute a sacrament, but the word of God must be added to it; the word, joined to the element, constitutes it a sacrament, according to Augustin. The word of God, which constitutes the element a sacrament, is the word of institution and of promise. God alone hath a sovereign right to constitute any thing a sacrament, and therefore we find that he alone hath instituted the sacraments; we can see this in circumcision, Gen. xvii. in the passover. Exod. xii in baptism. Matt. xxviii, and in the Supper, Matt. xvi. This word of the institution is the command of God, by which he chargeth us to hold, and to use such an element as a sign of spiritual things, as the Lord said concerning circumcision, "It shall be a sign of the covenant," Gen. xvii. 11. The word of the promise constitutes the element, instituted for a sign, also a seal, which confirms and assures, that believers do as truly partake of the thing signified, as they make use of the sign in faith. Thus "Abraham received the sign of circumcision for a seal of the righteousness of faith," as the text speaks. Therefore the Socinians, Remonstrants and Mennonites contradict the scripture, when they say that the sacraments are only bare signs of a profession, and of our thankfulness to God: and the Papists are guilty of slander, when they report of us, that we dispense no other than bare signs in the sacraments.

5. As a wise man doth nothing to no purpose, so the Lord also did not bestow the sacraments to no purpose, and without any end, but he instituted them, not merely that they might serve as duties of religious worship, but that we might, by using them, bind ourselves solemnly, as it were, by a military oath, to obey him; also, that they might serve for signs of the pure worship, of the communion of saints, and of their separation from the assemblies of erroneous persons. Moreover the Lord instituted the sacraments, that he might oblige us to acknowledge his sealed kindness; but they were bestowed especially for the confirmation of our faith.

We must illustrate all this more fully, when we treat of the nature of baptism, and of the Lord's supper: we will now only show how the Holy Ghost confirms our faith by the sacraments. He doth this, (a) by bringing us to a better understanding of the promise of the gospel through the sacraments. The signs are like pictures, which represent Christ and all his benefits to us: when a person makes a proper use of the signs, he will be presently led to a knowledge of the thing signified by them, and obtain a lively view of it. The signs are indeed memorials, according to Exod. xii. 14. 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. Besides this, the Holy Spirit irradiates the soul with his light, by which she is enabled to "behold the glory of the Lord as in a glass," 2 Cor. iii. 18. (b) By giving believers the sacraments for seals, and enabling them to make use of them as such, as Abraham was taught by him, Rom. iv. 11. The sacraments are indeed seals of the Testament, which was confirmed by the death of Christ, and they are, as it were, pledges and earnests for confirming the faithfulness of Christ. (c) This would have no force, and would have no influence on the soul, if the Holy Ghost did not "bestow himself for an earnest and seal, in order to confirm and to seal the soul," according to 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. Eph. i. 13, 14. iv. 30, which he doth particularly, when he causeth her to enjoy in, and by the use of the sacraments the thing signified, as he did to the Lord Jesus, when he was baptized: "The heavens were then opened, and the Spirit of God descended upon him as a dove, and a voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Matt. iii. 16, 17, "Jesus said, it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you they are spirit, and they are life," John vi. 63.

2. Although there is a great difference between the word of the gospel and the sacraments, since the word affects us by our hearing, and the sacraments by the other senses; the word works faith, and the sacraments confirm it; the word promiseth faith, and the sacra-

ments seal it, and the word can be profitable without the sacraments, but the sacraments cannot without the word; nevertheless the word and sacraments agree herein, that "they both direct our faith to the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus upon the cross, as the only ground of our salvation," which the instructor exhibits in the sixty seventh question against the Romanists, who teach a totally different doctrine, when they say that the sacraments contain grace, and that it is given *ex opere operato*, "from the work itself," and that the efficacy of the sacraments nevertheless depends upon the administrator of them; yea, they lead souls more to the sacrifice of the mass, than to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. And they direct men thus, not to the sacrifice of Christ, as the only foundation of salvation, but to the sacraments, to seek their salvation in them. The instructor sets himself against this, when he saith, "The Holy Ghost teacheth us in the gospel, and assures us by the sacraments, that the whole of our salvation depends upon that one sacrifice of Christ, which he accomplished for us on the cross." That the Holy Ghost teacheth us this in the gospel hath been abundantly proved on the sixth, eleventh, twenty third and twenty fourth Lord's days. The Holy Ghost assures us of this same thing by the sacraments; for circumcision refers to "the circumcision of Christ, without hands," Col. ii. 11, 12. The passover is therefore called Christ himself, 1 Cor. v. 7. That baptism and the Lord's supper also refer only to the bloody sacrifice of Christ, will be shown in order on the following Lord's days.

3. As we read of several covenants, which God made with men, so we read also of several sacraments; for the sacraments are adapted to the nature of the covenants, inasmuch as they are signs and seals of the covenants. We read of one covenant, which had only temporal promises, to wit, the covenant that God made with Noah, with all his posterity, and with every living creature, in which he promised that he would not destroy the earth again with a general flood. This covenant had the rainbow for its sacrament, according to Gen. ix. 8—17. But this covenant supposed the covenant of grace, since the Lord made it only to preserve an elect seed alive, and to glorify himself, as a gracious God. But the other covenants have heavenly promises; these are either the covenant of works, established with Adam and all his posterity, in which the Lord God promised life, in consequence of the perfect observation of his law. He gave the tree of life as a sacrament to confirm this promise. Or the covenant of redemption which the Father established from eternity with his Son, in which he required of him, that he should give his soul a ransom for many, and promised him that

he should see his seed and be glorified. The Son of God employed all the sacraments of the covenant of grace to confirm this covenant. The covenant of grace is the third, which hath spiritual and heavenly promises, and particularly that the Lord will be the God of the sinner, which is the sum of every gracious promise. This covenant of grace, having a twofold administration or dispensation, to wit, of the Old and of the New Testament, hath also, according to the dispensations of those times, two kinds of sacraments, to wit, either of the Old or of the New Testament. These were extraordinary sacraments, as the preservation of Noah with his household in the ark by water, according to 1 Peter iii. 20, 21, the passage of Israel through the red sea, the pillar of cloud, and the rock, as Paul teacheth us, 1 Cor. x. 1—4, or ordinary sacraments; such were all the ceremonies of the typical worship; but circumcision and the passover were more especially the ordinary sacraments of that time. See Gen. xvii. and Exd. xii. The sacraments of the New Testament are baptism and the Lord's supper; these and no others did Christ institute, Matt. xxviii. 19. xxvi. 26, 27, 28. He himself made use of no others. A Christian needeth no others, inasmuch as baptism is to him a sacrament of regeneration and of incorporation into the church, and the supper, of nourishment. Paul hath respect to no others, 1 Cor. x. 1—4. xii. 13. And therefore the Papists are to be condemned, since they have added five others to these, to wit, confirmation, auricular confession, extreme unction, orders and matrimony; for the first four were not instituted by Christ; was matrimony instituted, it was not however instituted to be a sacrament, since it wants the constituent parts of a sacrament; if it were instituted to be a sacrament, it ought to be common to all believers, and all ought to be bound to marry, which the word of God doth not teach. And why do they then forbid matrimony, as too carnal, to persons whom they call spiritual?

No one disputes that there is a great difference between the sacraments of the Old and of the New Testament. The sacraments of the Old Testament had other and more difficult signs than the sacraments of the New Testament: those were instituted by Christ, while he was promised, but these by him manifested in the flesh: those sealed that he should satisfy, but these seal that he hath satisfied. But that the sacraments of the Old Testament were types, which did not effect the thing signified, and that the sacraments of the New Testament are antitypes, which communicate and effect grace, as the Romanists assert, this is disallowed by Paul, when he saith concerning the Israelites, 1 Cor. x. 2, 3, 4, that "they," like

the Corinthians, were all baptized, and did all eat of the same spiritual meat; and did all drink of the same spiritual drink; (for they drank of the spiritual rock, which followed them; and that rock was Christ.)" The sacraments of the Old Testament typified Christ only, Coll. ii. 17. Peter saith indeed that "baptism was a figure," (or antitype) "of Noah's ark, in which he was saved by water," 1 Peter iii. 20, 21, but he saith also what he understands by that typified baptism, "not that which is a putting away of the filth of the flesh, but that which is the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." And verily the preservation in the ark by water represented the thing signified by baptism, to wit, Christ, his covenant, and all the benefits of it.

APPLICATION.

See, hearers, in this manner is faith wrought and confirmed. What think ye, is not he who hath faith happy? it renders him a partaker of Christ, and of all his benefits: "It is given him in the behalf of Christ, to believe on him," Philip. i. 29. It is wrought in him effectually, he would never have believed, if the Holy Spirit had not wrought and effected it in him; yea, is it not a wonderful favour that "he who hath begun a good work in you will also perform it, until the day of Jesus Christ?" Philip. i. 6 .Ye, in whose hearts this faith hath been wrought, are also "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time," as Peter saith, 1 Peter i. 5. "God, who hath promised you the hope of everlasting life, and hath sworn, that he might show more abundantly the immutability of his counsel, and that ye might have a strong consolation, cannot lie, it is impossible for him to lie," Titus i. 2. Heb. vi. 17, 18. And, as if this were not enough, he gives you also the pledges and seals of his truth, and of the righteousness of faith.

But what think ye all? hath the Holy Ghost wrought faith in your hearts? verily all men have not faith, but only the elect of God." according to the words of Paul, 2 Thess. iii. 2. Titus i. 3. We have shown largely enough on the seventh Lord's day who have not faith, and who have it in truth. Think only on what we have said there, that ye may see whether the Holy Ghost have wrought faith in your hearts, or not: we will not repeat what we have said on that Lord's

day. But how many are there among you to whom the Spirit hath not yet given faith! For

1. Some of you imagine that they have faith: but how have ye attained to it? by your birth of your parents? by baptism, or the Lord's supper? by your good natural disposition? by your virtuous education? your civil or religious behaviour? all these things could not have wrought faith in you. Do ye say that ye hope the Holy Ghost hath wrought it in you? in what manner did he do it? did he truly humble your hearts, actually bring you to Christ, unite you to him, that ye might pursue holiness, as well as happiness? Do not deceive yourselves, we beseech you, with vain imaginations, thinking that we cannot know this so well. How! can such a great work be wrought in the soul, and such a great change be produced in her, that she, who was blind, is made to see, she who was dead, is made alive, she, who was unwilling, is made willing, and she not know aught of this? Perhaps ye think, the Holy Ghost doth not work faith in all after the same manner. It is true, we have also shown this before; but it is also certain, that although the Holy Ghost may bring a person to faith by a calm discovery of the truth of the gospel, or by the cords of love, which transport him out of himself, and although faith may be infused into his heart from his birth, he will nevertheless repeatedly after this have discoveries of his sinfulness, and be humbled on account of it, will betake himself to the Son of God for reconciliation, and peace with God, on account of his continual backslidings, and will exercise himself in serious godliness, and thus manifest that faith is not dead in him, but alive and active. See this in Lydia, Matthew, Zacheus, Micha the steward, John the Baptist, Timothy and others, who manifested that they had received faith.

2. Others of you know that they do not yet possess faith through the Spirit. We should think that these would be exceedingly troubled, and awake up in good earnest, that they might obtain faith of the Spirit: but how careless are the most of them, as if it were of no consequence to them whether they were saved or damned! It is amazing, that ye, who see that ye have not faith, are yet so careless, sluggish and listless. How is it possible, might we ask: but we need not weary ourselves, in order to learn what hath bewitched you thus, men busy themselves too much with the affairs of the world: these fill and possess their hearts so, that they find neither leisure nor inclination to think seriously and deliberately on their miserable condition, how they may be delivered out of it, and how they shall obtain faith. Others find such a sweetness in the

lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes and the pride of life, that every idea concerning faith, salvation and damnation which either ariseth in their hearts, or is outwardly proposed is irksome to them. There are those also, in whom the Holy Spirit excites a concern for their dangerous condition, and who even wish that they had faith, and say with Balaam, Numb. xxiii. 10. "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." But it is "the desire of the slothful which killeth him, because his hands refuse to labour," Prov. xxi. 25. For they are backward to believe: because they have heard others talk somewhat of their inability, they think, how can I help it: if God will not give me faith by his Spirit, I cannot give it to myself: but it is not your inability, but your unwillingness, that hinders you from coming to the Lord Jesus, that ye may have life, John v. 40 The Spirit works in you by convincing you, by revealing the way of life to you, and by stirring you up to believe and repent; but ye oppose him, quench him, and drive him from you by your carelessness, and by indulging your lusts, and so ye resist the Holy Spirit, with the Jews.

In the mean time ye still dare to use the sacraments, as if ye, who have yet no faith, had a right to them, when they are only for believers, in order to confirm their faith; but they cannot surely confirm nor seal faith in you, when it doth not exist in you. Of what service are seals to an empty letter? of none at all. Ye separate that which God hath joined together, for ye make use of his covenant seals, but do not bestir yourselves in the least to enter into the covenant by faith; therefore ye are not yet become partakers of Christ, and of all his benefits, but are under the wrath of God; for "the wrath of God abideth on him, who believeth not the Son," John iii. 36. The precious gospel, which urgeth you to believe, is "a savour of death unto death" to you, as Paul speaks, 2 Cor. ii. 16. And of what service are the sacraments to you? do they not seal perdition to you? Hear what the Lord saith, Deut. xxxii. 34, 35 "is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures? To me belongeth vengeance and recompence, their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste." O that ye would only see it, and were concerned about it, so that with the jailer ye cried out, Acts. xvi. 30. "What must I do to be saved?" we should say to you, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved," vrs. 31. At least, hearers, abide under the word of the gospel, and offer up that ejaculation, that "the Holy Ghost would fall on you who hear it," as it happened, Acts x. 44.

But, believers, in whose hearts faith hath been truly wrought by the Holy Ghost, ye also are not unblamable here, since your faith is still so weak and small, notwithstanding so many means of the word, sacraments and operations of the Holy Ghost; for who among you hath yet made any considerable progress? what causes you to doubt so often concerning your hope of salvation, which ye have in God and Christ? is it not because it seems too great for you? because ye have little or no sensible grace? will not the least thought, that enters your mind without reason, as, "O if I should deceive myself," unsettle all your hopes? How little ability is there in your faith to employ Christ and his grace, instead of your own strength! men have scarcely any skill in this art. Are they called upon to suffer hatred, pain, shame, or loss on account of godliness, they shrink from it: there is not so much strength in their faith, that they dare to come out resolutely Are they in any danger, or under any heavy cross, with respect to their body, estate, or household; their faith fails, and they cry out, We perish: are they disturbed with doubtful apprehensions concerning their faith by their unbelieving hearts, by Satan, and by wicked men; they give all up in their own imaginations, and their minds are oppressed with fear; do they behold their meanness and unworthiness; they tremble; and how hardly can they endure to look at that which is to come! the blessed and unseen eternity, how dark doth it appear to the soul!

What think ye, that this is only your misery? yea, it is your misery, but it is a so your sin, and indeed a great sin, which is exceedingly hateful, and blamable in the eyes of the Lord. Hear how he chides his people on account of it, and believe that he chides you also, when he saith, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" Matt. viii. 26. "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Matt. xiv. 31. Hear from him language still more severe, Mark ix. 19. "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?" With no less earnestness and severity did he say Luke xxiv 25. "O fools and slow of heart to believe!"

But what do I say, that many are weak in the faith? it is still more sinful, that many become weaker in it, when they ought to wax strong, and to increase in faith. Is it not true, when some of you wax cold in their first love, and forsake it? for "faith worketh by love,," according to Gal. v. 6. And men show this, when they so easily indulge their constitutional sin, and their hearts do not bleed on account of it. They regard the things of this life too much, and their hearts are filled with them, so that they bewilder their understandings, captivate their affections, and consume the time, which

they ought to devote to seeking God: they can converse now so familiarly with worldly men, of whom they used to be suspicious; they are exceedingly estranged from communion with God, they live without him, and are unconcerned about it; with respect to the frame of their own minds, they neglect it, they seldom look into themselves, and are, as it were, strangers to themselves: yea, their discretion, which used to preserve their souls, is become giddy and extravagant: reading the word, family devotion, secret prayers, mutual conferences are neglected, or performed heartlessly, and in a cursory manner: the communion of saints, edifying others, and being edified by them is now become a strange work; yea, they will be even afraid to come into the presence of a serious, godly person; if they must be present with him, they will not enter upon serious discourse, or they will break it off by something else, and go their way. In the mean while, since the weak soul is not blind nor dead, she sees this as it were like a person who is half asleep, although her heart is awake, but she hath not strength enough to break her chains; she complains of her weakness, she prays against it, and that she may be delivered from it, she will sometimes bestir and exert herself, and will encourage herself amidst her defects; but her strength is gone, the Lord, the strength of the soul, is departed from her; therefore she becomes dejected, languishes still more, and declines finally so far, that neither she herself, nor others can perceive any difference between her and a worldling.

Ye, who are become so weak in the faith, are ye not ashamed? is this your kindness to your friend? hath he deserved this at your hand? do ye reward him thus for all his love, for his groanings and writhings under his Father's wrath? will ye thus grieve the Spirit, by whom ye are sealed to the day of redemption? did the Father for this elect you from such a hearty love, bestow his Son upon you, his Spirit, the pardon of your sins, his image, a blessed hope? is this the fruit of his word, of his sacraments, and of all his operations in your souls? "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy Father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?" Deut. xxxii. 6. Know that the Lord hath this against you, that ye have left your first love." Rev. ii. 4. Hear what he saith to his people, who were become vain, and regard it as if said to you, Jer. ii. 2—5. "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and become vain?" Do ye find now

so much tranquility of mind, and peace with God? doth it not grieve you, that ye have declined so far from your youthful vigour, and experience the decripitude of old age? and whereas ye were once fat and flourishing, that ye are now become so meager and lean? would ye indeed die in such a condition? surely ye would not? "Remember therefore whence ye are fallen, and repent, and do your first works, lest he come quickly to you, and remove your candlestick out of his place," as he admonisheth and threatens, Rev ii. 5, or he will visit you with another grievous judgment, which will awaken you out of your sleepy humour: "Return, return, O Shulamith; return, return, that we may look upon thee." Thus he calls to you, Song vi. 13

Other believers are in a better condition, they are confirmed in the faith, although they do not perceive it, but are fearful that their faith doth not increase, because they have almost forgotten how weak they were formerly: they will see just day by day how much they are confirmed, which is as impossible as that they should see how much a man, as a tree grows: they think that they are not confirmed, because they cannot exercise faith with so much clearness and liveliness as at the beginning, when they were dandled and fondled like children; but this is no evidence that they do not grow: perhaps their faith is now more single: they are also too much prejudiced against themselves, not daring to think highly of the grace of God, which hath been shown to them; and this hinders them from seeing the confirmation of their faith.

There are others who advance greatly in the faith, and like young men grow strong in it, according to 1 John ii. 14. I will not repeat now what * one of my highly esteemed teachers hath said very beautifully and pertinently in his book, entitled "Reasonable Service," when he speaks of the spiritual growth, that the believer grows, when his spiritual light increaseth, when he maintains a steadfast walk with God, when he makes a wiser, and a more believing use of Christ, when he acts in a more single manner, and improves more than formerly in active graces, both by exerting himself against more sins, and in more virtues, and also by continuing steadfast in a vigourous, opposition to sin, and prosecuting every duty with more prudence, with more firmness, faith and zeal: but I would add to this, that be-

* The author intends by this person the celebrated William Brakel, a pastor of the Reformed church in the city of Rotterdam. His book entitled *Redelyke Godsdienst*, or Reasonable Service, is considered as one of the most excellent treatises on practical and experimental theology extant in the Dutch language.

lievers who increase in faith, (a) have a more settled and steadfast assurance of their state of grace. Do they experience darkness, the hiding of God's countenance, deadness, and the power of corruption, it doth not shake them so, that it causes them to doubt of their state: they are grieved, and they humble themselves on account of it, but they will not therefore abandon their hope in the Lord. Continual exercises of faith, frequent discoveries of God's work of grace in their minds by his Spirit, and manifold experiences of the goodness of the Lord have established their hearts so, that all their doubts concerning their blessed condition are banished out of their minds, and have no more hold on the soul, that is thus advanced in faith: "they have made their calling and election sure, so that they will never fall," 2 Peter i. 10. (b) They value now likewise more highly the mysteries and truths of the gospel than formesly: they have a better insight into them; they see more truth, divinity, and glory in them: they can improve them better, and direct themselves better by them. Formerly the literal truths were too high for them, too barren, and had but little influence upon their apprehensions and exercises, so as to comfort and excite them, their principal concern was about their state of grace, their contemplations were exercised chiefly relative to the frame of their minds, and their desires and longings were more for immediate influences and sensible grace: but now they have a greater knowledge of the truths of the gospel, their understandings are more nourished by them, and their hearts become thus more established; yea, the contemplation of the mysteries of the gospel transmits the image and glory of them into the soul, which increases habitual grace in the mind, and establishes it the more; for "they are filled with the knowledge of the will of God, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that they may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might according to his glorious power," Coll. i. 9, 10, 11. See also Heb. v. 13, 14. 2 Cor. iii. 18. 2 Peter iii. 18. (c) The soul being confirmed in the faith, will pursue sanctification more, and with more steadfastness and singleness than before. She is at first chiefly employed with her state of grace, in order that she may obtain assurance: one while she is encouraged, but soon after the merest trifle discourageth her; but when her faith is confirmed, she is not perplexed with these matters any more, but labours now only for sanctification. Before her confirmation she had indeed an inclination to holiness, and endeavoured to be holy; but how soon was she forced out of her way, and she knew not how to enter upon it again, but fainted and was discouraged; but

being now confirmed, she doth not stop at any difficulty, but proceeds, and "treads like the mighty men in the mire of the streets," Zech. x. 5. Do her feet at any time turn out of the path, doth she transgress against the Lord, she humbles herself before him, lays hold on the Mediator for reconciliation, and begins her course anew in the strength of the Lord, she "runs, and is not weary nor faint," Isaiah xl. 31. While the soul is yet weak, she is exceedingly defective with respect to singleness in her sanctification, she often labours in her own strength, and with her own exertions from a legal motive, pursuing holiness, that she may the more easily obtain reconciliation, peace and boldness toward God: how often is she exceedingly strained, and full of anxiety whether she may do this or that, and she stumbles continually, because, since she is not established in the faith, she can do but few things from faith. See Rom. xiv. 22, 23. But when she is further advanced, she endeavours to do all things by the Spirit, "being strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," Eph. vi. 10. It is her highest aim to do the will of God, because he commands it, and that he may be glorified by her: before this she aimed at her own pleasure and ease: but in whatsoever she now doth, she is enlarged, because she doth it with an assurance, and thus with a belief, that it is his will. See Philip. i. 11. Col. iii. 17. (d) The believer, after his faith is confirmed, is more actively busy in his pursuits, than while he was weak; he would then have just such immediate, high, mighty and urging influences of grace to do aught, or he would stand still, and was disconcerted, and wist not how to engage in his duty, or to excite himself to it; he was more passive than active: but being now established in the faith, he becomes more active and working in his holy exercises, knowing how to employ his reason and habitual grace, according to the measure of preventing grace, to direct himself thereby, and to perform his duties with a wonderful dexterity and ease, he knows how to comfort and excite himself by the word of God: when the law of his mind urgeth him to do his duty, he obeys it with David, Psalm xxvii. 8. He hath learned the evangelic art to derive by his faith influences and grace for grace from the fulness of Jesus, to improve him according to his offices, and to adjust the sails of his desires, and to direct the whole ship of his soul by the rudder of his understanding and judgment in such a manner, as to receive the wind and breathing of the Holy Spirit, and to proceed thus toward the land into pleasant havens; for it is not only his happiness, but also his duty to be "filled with the Spirit," Eph. v. 18. And thus he "works out his salvation with fear

and trembling; for God worketh in him, both to will and to do," Philip. ii. 12, 13.

Truly a glorious condition, that a person not only hath faith, but that he is also so strong in it. O that I could say of each of you, and "thank God, that your faith groweth exceedingly," as the apostle said of the believing Thessalonians, 2 Thess. i. 3. Are ye, O believers, desirous of growing in faith? have ye a desire to exert yourselves, in order that your faith may be confirmed? and would ye know what ye must do for this purpose? see here,

1. Thank God that ye have obtained faith. Though it may not be strong, but weak, it is nevertheless a precious faith: ye partake of Christ and of all his benefits by it; it hath been wrought by the Holy Ghost with an almighty power; yea, he will confirm it: we have shown above how happy this renders you; behold then how much it obligeth you to be thankful to the Lord, and how it excludes boasting: "It is not of you, it is the gift of God; not of works; lest any man should boast," Eph. ii. 8, 9. "For who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou, which thou didst not receive? and if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" thus asks the apostle, 1 Cor. iv. 7. If the soul would exercise herself more in thanksgiving on account of her faith, she would also obtain more grace, and a greater confirmation of her faith by the Holy Spirit: the Lord saith, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of God," Psalm l. 23.

2. Impress it upon your minds, and let it have a due influence on your souls, that it is your duty to become strong in the faith. It is the nature of faith to grow; it is acting contrary to the nature and natural tendency of it, to keep it in a weak and dwarfish condition; yea, every evil frame proceeds from the weakness of faith. God also enjoins it on you to confirm your faith; the commands are too numerous to be transcribed here, read them, 1 Cor. xvi. 13. Eph. vi. 10 Coll. ii. 6, 7. Heb. vi. 1. 2 Peter iii 18. When this hath a due weight on your hearts, ye will indeed strive for a confirmation of your faith, and will "go from strength to strength," Psalm lxxxiv. 7.

3. Study the truths and mysteries of the gospel, and endeavour to obtain an excellent and thorough knowledge of them. Ye ought with Apollos to be "mighty in the scriptures," Acts xviii. 24, with Paul to have "a knowledge of the mysteries of Christ," Eph. iii. 4, and with the believing Romans to be "filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another," Rom. xv. 14. This would nourish your understandings, and cause your faith to grow, and be-

come strong to admiration; for "speaking the truth in love, we would grow up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ," according to the words of Paul, Eph. iv 15.

4. Cultivate an historical faith; that is, endeavour to obtain an assurance of the truth and divinity of the word, so that ye may look upon it to be true and divine on account of the declaration of God in his word, and the testimony of the Spirit of God in your minds, and "receive thus the testimony of God, and set to your seal, that God is true," John iii. 33. Thus "we obtain all riches to the full assurance of understanding," Coll. ii. 2. Your neglect of historical faith is the reason why all the direct and reflex acts of your faith are so feeble, and like a maimed hand, or a wrenched foot; but when we become strong in historical faith, then we can sit down firm, as upon a rock, and perform all things with strength by faith: for "faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," Heb. xi. 1.

5. Collect also from the gospel a treasure of promises, which the Lord God hath made relative to the confirmation of your faith. See what he who is true hath promised you, Job. xvii. 9. Psalm x. 17. xcii. 12—15. Ezek xxxiv. 16. Zech. x 3, 5, 12. Mal. iv. 2. This tends wonderfully to confirm our faith; for all confirming grace is conveyed to the soul according to, and by means of promises, collected and properly improved.

6. Pray for the confirmation of your faith. The Lord hath indeed promised to confirm it, but he will also be sought for this, Ezek. xxxvi. 36, 37. The saints have also prayed much for the confirmation of their faith, Psalm lxviii. 28. The father of the lunatic child "cried out with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief," Mark ix. 24. The apostles said to the Lord, "increase our faith," Luke xvii. 5, Paul prayed also for the Ephesians, that they might be "strengthened by the Spirit," so that they should have a strong faith, Eph. iii. 16, 17. Yea, importune the Lord by the promises which he hath made to you, that he would confirm your faith; so David acted. Psalm cxix. 49, 50. This would add much strength to your faith.

7. Exercise faith also much: if ye have not yet an assurance, that ye are in a state of grace, exercise faith then to justification; if ye have an assurance, exercise it from justification, as we have taught on the seventh Lord's day. The life of grace is nothing but the life of faith, which must therefore be exercised repeatedly: of this we have also spoken on the seventh Lord's day. This the believer must therefore exercise, that he may be confirmed in it, for we learn by

doing, and we strengthen a habit by exercise, and we acquire a facility of acting by continual activity. See Heb. v. 14.

8. Let faith improve Jesus in all his relations, which he hath taken upon himself, in order to promote the work of faith; for "he is the finisher of faith," Heb xii. 2. He merited faith for you, he hath received a fulness of the Spirit for faith, he is exalted for this purpose, it is his office to give and confirm faith, and "help is laid on him" for this end, Psalm lxxxix. 19. Let then your faith make use of him, employ him, and derive from him his Spirit through the conduits of the promises for the confirmation of your faith, that he may appear active in you by faith. See Gal. ii. 20. Eph. iv. 15, 16. Finally,

9. Endeavour to make a believing and judicious use of the sacraments, receiving them as your seals by the word of institution and of promise, with Abraham, Rom. iv. 11. This would be a wonderful confirmation of your faith; but we will treat more of this duty in the sequel.

Is your faith greatly assaulted and shaken, consider that "the Finisher of faith prays for you, that your faith may not fail," as he himself saith, Luke xxii. 31, 32. It will therefore not fail, for "he is always heard;" see John xi. 42. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. Therefore to conclude, we say with Paul from 2 Thess i. 11, 12. "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ," Amen.

EXPLANATION

OF THE

NATURE OF BAPTISM.

XXVI. LORD'S DAY.

Rom. vi. 3, 4. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Q. 69. *How art thou admonished and assured by holy baptism, that the one sacrifice of Christ upon the cross is of real advantage to thee?*

A. Thus, that Christ appointed this external washing with water, adding thereto this promise, that I am as certainly washed by his blood and spirit from all the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as I am externally washed with water, by which the filthiness of the body is commonly washed away.

Q. 70. *What is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ?*

A. It is to receive of God the remission of sins freely for the sake of Christ's blood, which he shed for us by his sacrifice upon the cross: and also to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified to be members of Christ, that so we may more and more die unto sin, and lead holy and unblamable lives.

Q. 71. Where has Christ promised us that he will as certainly wash us by his blood and Spirit, as we are washed by the water of baptism?

A. In the institution of baptism, which is thus expressed, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." This promise is also repeated where the scripture calls baptism, "The washing of regeneration, and the washing away of sins.

AS it is necessary to born, in order to be a man, so it is necessary to be born again, in order to be a Christian. It did not please the Lord to make all men immediately out of the earth, as he made the first Adam, but to join a woman to Adam, and to give them both the law of marriage, "increase and multiply," that he might make of one blood all nations of men. Therefore not one man hath been introduced into the world since that period, who was not born of a woman; for which reason man hath been defined and called from his mother, "man that is born of a woman," Job xiv. xv. 14. Thus also a man doth not become a Christian, except by a second birth. Our first parents having been created in the image of God, would have transmitted that image to all their posterity, if they had not deprived themselves of it by sin, and it would then not have been necessary that their posterity should be newborn; but having lost that image, they have transmitted their own image, even sin, to all their posterity. This Moses teacheth us, Gen. v. 1, 3, "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him. And Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image" The Lord, willing to restore man to his first condition, appointed for himself an everlasting people, and gave his Son to them in a spiritual marriage to be a bridegroom and husband to them, that he might thus obtain a holy seed by a new birth. See Isaiah liv. 1—6. It was also necessary that the sinner should be born again of that marriage; for he is by his natural birth as it were degenerate, unnatural, yea, bereaved of humanity, and "is of his father the devil," John viii 44. He must therefore become "a new creature, the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works," 2 Cor. v. 17. Eph. ii 10. Since "he hath sinned, he comes short of the glory" and image "of God," according to Rom. iii. 23. It is therefore necessary that he should "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," as the apostle of the Gen-

tiles requireth, Eph iv. 24. He is "dead in trespasses and sins," but by regeneration he is "quickened with Christ," Eph. ii. 1, 5. The sinner is without strength, the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," Rom. viii. 7. It was therefore also necessary, that new powers, "a new heart and a new spirit," should be given him by a new birth, as is promised, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Further, by his first birth he is a stranger to the church of God, "he hath no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem," as Nehemiah speaks, Neh ii. 20 If he shall then partake of the privileges of the church, he must be incorporated into it, must be "joined to it, be a fellowcitizen of the saints, and of the household of God," Acts ii. 41. Eph. ii. 19. Permit me to add, that he is by his birth unclean and loathsome, and it is therefore necessary that he should, like a child who is newly born, be washed and rinsed; this the Lord himself teacheth us, Ezek xvi. 1—9. This is also clearly discovered to us in baptism, the first sacament of the New Testament, by which regeneration, incorporation into the church, and the washing away of sins is signified and sealed.

The foregoing Lord's day having taught us that believers are admonished and assured by the sacraments, that the sacrifice of Christ is advantageous to them, and that the sacraments are, holy baptism and the holy supper, this is now shown with respect to baptism.

I. We must discourse somewhat concerning the word "baptism," and then,

II. We will consider the matter itself.

I. The noun substantive baptism, *baptismos*, *baptisma*, and the verb baptize, *baptizein*, *baptien*, signify to rinse, to wash, and to cleanse any thing by dipping. In this sense are the words used of the superstitious washings of the Pharisees, Mark vii. 4, "When they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables." But we find these words also used in a figurative sense of the communication of the grace and gifts of the Holy Spirit: "He that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire," saith the baptist, Matt. iii. 10. These words denote also sometimes figuratively, suffering tribulation, when Jesus saith, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished," Luke xii. 50. Matt. xx. 22, 23, and the doctrine of the gospel, which is confirmed and received in baptism: thus "Apollos knew only the baptism of John," Acts xviii. 25. The word baptism, or baptize is

also used in a sacramental sense: Paul saith of the Israelites, that "they were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea," 1 Cor x. 2. The ecclesiastical and typical washings of the Old Testament, are called by the apostle, *baptismoi*, "baptisms," Heb. ix. 10, which our translators render "washings." To these the Jews added also a baptism, when they would solemnly receive and incorporate into their church a convert, or proselyte to Judaism; for after they had circumcised him, they baptized him, after which they ordered him to offer his gifts; hence it was that the baptism of John and of Christ did not appear so strange to them; yea, they seem to suppose that Christ when he came, would baptize, for they asked, John i. 35, "Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not the Christ?" But these words are mostly used, as we also use them here, of "the first sacrament of the New Testament, in which the washing away of sins through the blood and spirit of Christ is signified and sealed with water to believers, by virtue of the institution and promise of Christ."

II. In order that we may consider the matter itself, we must attend, 1 to the sign of baptism. 2. To the thing signified. 3. The union of them. 4. The foundation of the union, and 5. To the circumstances.

1. The external sign is the use of water, "the external washing with water, by which the filthiness of the body is commonly washed away," saith the instructor, "John came, and was sent to baptize with water," John i. 31, 33. "He baptized in the river Jordan," Mark i 5. "Also at Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there," John iii. 23. "See here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized," said the Eunuch, Acts viii. 36. It is necessary that it should be pure and clean water as those rivers were, if it shall be proper to represent the spiritual cleansing. And therefore the Papists pollute baptism, and trifle with it, and with the institutor of it, when among many adjurations of the devil, and crossings, they besmear the nose and ears of the person who is baptized with spittle, and anoint him with oil. Who hath required this at their hands? But it was necessary to confirm their opinion concerning the virtue of waterbaptism: water alone would not suffice to wash away sins—popish spittle and oil are more efficacious. Trifles: in this manner do the Papists "make the commandment of God of none effect by their traditions," like the Pharisees, Matt. xv. 6.

Nevertheless, water by itself cannot cleanse, unless it be used. Anciently they obliged the person who was to be baptized, to go into the water, and they dipped him in it, by which means he seem-

ed to be dead, and buried under the water, and when he came up again, to rise from the dead, and so his whole body was cleansed; but as this cannot be done in these cold countries without great danger to the person who is baptized, pouring or sprinkling hath been wisely introduced. This ceremony is not to be disapproved of, as though it militated against the institution of Christ, and the efficacy of baptism, since dipping and sprinkling are only circumstances. It is not to be thought, that the apostles always dipped the persons, who were to be baptized, but they also sprinkled them when occasion required. Who can believe that when they baptized three thousand at the same time, they dipped them? Who can imagine that when they baptized Cornelius and Lydia in their own houses, yea, the jailer by night, they then found vessels at hand, capacious enough to plunge fullgrown persons in and under the water? The thing signified is also expressed by sprinkling, and is called "water, and the blood of sprinkling," Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Heb. xii. 24. We can also cleanse as well by sprinkling, as by dipping; it is of no consequence, whether we sprinkle the face, or the whole body, inasmuch as the face, being the principal part, represents the whole man. Under the Old Testament, when one member was circumcised, the whole person was considered as circumcised. "When Peter desired that his hands and head should be washed, as well as his feet, Jesus said to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit," John xiii. 9, 10. Why should we not then look upon him to be wholly clean, whose face is washed?

We reckon it a matter of indifference, whether we sprinkle or dip once or thrice, if it be not done to confirm any erroneous opinion, like the Arians, who, dipped thrice, because they divided the Godhead: and therefore the council of Toledo, in the year 633, permitted the church of Spain to dip only once, that they might thus testify the purity of their doctrine against the Arians. We may sprinkle or dip once to testify the oneness of the divine essence, and thrice to testify that there are three distinct divine Persons; but when we say that sprinkling once or thrice is a matter of indifference, we do not mean that every person who baptizeth, hath a right by his own authority to sprinkle once, when the church is used to sprinkle thrice; for he who should undertake this would be suspected of presumption and of error.

Since baptism must be administered in the name of the divine Trinity, it is proper that the Trinity should be mentioned, when a person is baptized, according to the command of Jesus, who ordered his ambassadours "to baptize in the name of the Father, of the Son, and

of the Holy Ghost," Matt xxviii. 19. It is true he doth not command, Ye shall say, when ye baptize, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, &c. yet it is not to be thought that the apostles were silent when they baptized, but that they expressed the virtue of baptism by words. They baptized indeed in the name of the Lord Jesus; but the whole divine Trinity manifests itself in Jesus: the Father is in him, and he is in the Father, and the Holy Ghost bestows all grace from the Son, who hath it from the Father, according to the words of Christ, John xiv. 7—16, and xvi. 13, 14, 15. And therefore it is the same thing, whether we baptize in the name of the Lord Jesus, or in the name of the divine Trinity. We will show presently what is signified by baptizing in the name of the Trinity.

2. But this use of water in the name of the Trinity is not merely a commanded duty of divine worship, but it is also significative, or it respects something signified. This is the blood of Christ, shed in his sacrifice on the cross, and his Spirit purchased thereby, by which the sins of the elect are washen away, according to the promises of the covenant of grace.

In order to understand this properly, we must remember that God enters into a covenant of grace with the believing sinner, and promises him therein that his sins shall be washen away. "I will cleanse you from all your filthiness, and from all your idols," saith the Lord, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. But God could not do this, unless a sufficient sacrifice were offered, upon which the sinner could enter into a covenant treaty with God, and God with the sinner, as men were wont anciently to enter into covenants by sacrifices. The Lord having respect to this saith, Psalm l, 5, "Gather my saints together unto me: those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

When the Lord had established his covenant with all Israel, "Moses took the blood of the sacrifice, and sprinkled it upon the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you," Exod. xxiv. 1—8. But the sacrifice served not only to confirm the covenant, but also to cleanse the Israelites, in order that it might shadow forth the true washing away of sins by a better blood: "The blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh," as Paul saith, Heb. ix. 13. But since it is impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins," as the same apostle speaks, Heb. x. 1. therefore the God of the covenant gave his son, who offered himself up to God in his bloody sacrifice, that he might obtain the true purification, and also confirm the covenant of God with the sinner. The same wise apostle teacheth us this again; after he

had shown that the blood of beasts, offered up in sacrifice, could sanctify to the purifying of the flesh, he saith, Heb. ix. 14, 15, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. "But we are baptized not only in the name of the Father, who establishes the covenant, and promises the washing away of sins, and in the name of the Son, who purchases the covenant, and the promises thereof by his sacrifice, and his blood, shed therein; but also in the name of the Holy Ghost, who is likewise signified in baptism, and hath a relation to the covenant of grace, and to the washing away of sins; for the Holy Ghost effects by a real and active application the washing away of sins, which the Father promiseth, and the Son hath purchased: therefore Paul saith, 1 Cor. vi. 11, "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." And therefore the Holy Ghost also brings the sinner into the bond of the covenant, which is also signified by baptism, according to the promise of the Lord, Isaiah xliv. 3, 4, 5. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the watercourses. One shall say I am the Lord's: and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob: and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." And thus baptism is a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, and of the washing away of sins by the blood and Spirit of Christ, promised in that covenant by the Father.

But "what is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ," thus asks the instructor, and he saith that it is our justification and sanctification: and he speaks thus with the scripture, agreeably to the words which we have just now quoted from 1 Cor. vi. 11. We have explained, in treating on the twenty third Lord's day, the manner in which God justifieth the sinner, and forgives his sins. This forgiving of sins is expressed by cleansing, when the Lord promiseth, Jer. xxxiii. 8, "I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, and I will pardon all their iniquities." But as sin doth not only subject the sinner to guilt, of which he is cleansed by justification, but as it renders him also filthy, that filth is therefore also washen away by

sanctification. The catechism describes this as consisting in three things. (a) The sinner is renewed by it; for the image of God, after which he is renewed, is restored in him by "putting off the old man, and putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. iv. 22, 24. He is then, like one who hath been washed, clean and new, and so he is "saved by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," Titus iii. 5. (b) Sanctification implies also, that a person is sanctified to be a member of Christ by which he is surrendered to Christ, and is united to him; Paul saith. "We all are baptized by one Spirit into one body," 1 Cor. xii. 13. And thus we partake of the holiness of our Head, yea, just as if we had been dead, buried, and raised up with him, according to our text. (c) It belongs also to sanctification, that a person dies more and more to sin, and leads a godly and unblamable life. Sanctification is not perfect in a person at the beginning, but it advanceth gradually, since the soul herself becomes active, bewails her sins, fights against them, and endeavours to drive them out, and desires herself time after time to conduct in a manner that is pleasing to God: for "it is given to her to grow, to be changed from glory to glory, and as she is holy, to become more holy," Psalm xcii. 13. 2 Cor. iii. 18. Rev. xxii. 11. Both these benefits, which are signified in baptism, are effected by the blood and Spirit of Christ. His blood, that is, his bloody suffering hath merited justification and sanctification; for "he is made to them who are his, righteousness and sanctification," 1 Cor. i. 30. And thus "he is a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin, and for uncleanness," Zech. xiii. 1. Therefore the beloved disciple saith, 1 John i. 7. "The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sin." But how is justification intimated to them internally? is it not by the Holy Spirit, as we showed upon the twenty third Lord's day? Thus the Holy Spirit effects also the merited sanctification; for "God hath chosen them through sanctification of the Spirit," 1 Thess. iv. 13. 1 Peter i. 2. And therefore the Holy Spirit is likened to water, with which they are born again according to the words of Ezekiel and of the Saviour, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. John iii. 5.

Since now the covenant of God, and his gifts of grace are unchangeable, and since the Son of God hath made a perfect satisfaction for all the sins of his people, and loveth his own until the end, and the Holy Spirit abides for ever with believers for an everlasting seal; therefore the washing away of sins, signified in baptism, must necessarily have respect not only to sins committed before baptism

as the church of Rome imagines, but also to sins committed after baptism.

3. If water shall signify the blood and Spirit of Christ, there must necessarily be an union between the sign, and the thing signified, which union consists,

1. In a conformity between the use of water, and the working of the blood and Spirit of Christ, and indeed such a conformity, that the use of water represents in a lively manner the working and power of the blood and Spirit of Christ, and exhibits them to the senses; for, (a) when we make use of water to wash and cleanse ourselves, we suppose that we are unclean and filthy. Thus also the blood and Spirit of Christ, by which we are cleansed, teach us that we have defiled ourselves by sin, in order that we may humble and abase ourselves, and seek our purification out of ourselves in the blood and Spirit of Christ. When David had defiled himself greatly, he prayed to the Lord, Psalm li. 2, 3. "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin; for I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me." How excellently doth our form of baptism express this in its first part! thus it speaks, "This the dipping in, or sprinkling with water teacheth us, whereby the impurity of our souls is signified, and we admonished to loathe and humble ourselves before God, and seek for our purification and salvation without ourselves." (b) As we are sprinkled with water, so we are also sprinkled with the blood and Spirit of Christ, that is, we are rendered partakers of the power and working of Christ's blood and Spirit for the washing away of sins, and they are applied to us: "the Messiah should sprinkle many nations," according to Isaiah lii. 15. (c) We are united in the most intimate manner to the water by the use of waterbaptism, so we are also united to Christ through his blood and Spirit by the thing signified: therefore the text asks, "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death." Yea, we put Christ on as a garment, by baptism, Gal. iii. 27. (d) Those who were formerly baptized by dipping seemed to be as it were dead and buried under the water, which is also represented in some measure by sprinkling and pouring water on a person: but we are dead and buried to ourselves and to sin through the blood and Spirit of Christ: "We die to sin," saith the instructor in the seventieth question. The text having respect to this, saith, "We are buried with him by baptism into death. (e) As those who are baptized ascend up out of the water, as if they arose from the dead, so these also are made alive by the blood and Spirit of Christ. Therefore Paul said, in the

text, that believers are baptized into the death of Christ, "that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (f) As water washes away the filth of a person, so the blood and Spirit of Christ washes away our sins: this we have explained before. (g) When the names of the three divine Persons are pronounced upon us, their grace is also supplicated for us in baptism, as the apostle wished and prayed in behalf of the Corinthians, when he said, 2 Cor. xiii. 13. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all."

2. The union of the sign with the thing signified consists also in the joint use of both. Such a signifying power of the use of water is unprofitable, unless it be joined to the use of it, by which we enjoy not only the sign, but also the thing signified by the sign, through the working of the Holy Ghost and of faith; thus it is said, Titus iii. 5. "He hath saved us by the working of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." And so we "suffer ourselves," with Paul, Acts xxii. 16. "to be baptized, and our sins to be washed away." We are "buried by baptism into death with Christ," that is, in and united to him. Rom. vi. 4.

4. But what grounds have we to assert such an union of the sign with the thing signified? the word of God alone affords us freedom and grounds for this; For,

1. "The Lord Christ appointed this external washing with water," saith the catechism; whereby he enjoined, that we should wash with water, in order to signify and represent the washing away of sins by his blood and Spirit. John the Baptist was the first, who received the institution of baptism, that he might, as the forerunner of Jesus, prepare the Jews to receive the Christ, to whom John directed them: therefore he saith, John i. 31, 33. "I knew him not," that is, the Christ; "but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." After this, when Christ began to exercise his office in public, he commanded his apostles to baptize in his name; this we see in the account given by John the evangelist, when he saith, "that the Pharisees had heard, that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples," John iv. 1, 2. But the institution of baptism was not yet perfected, because the New Testament was not yet perfected; the baptism of John pointed to Christ, who should be mani-

fested to Israel, and the baptism of the apostles pointed to him, who was already manifested, and who was about to shed his blood, in order that he might obtain the Spirit, and so wash away sins; and therefore baptism was administered to the Jews only. But Christ being risen, because he had shed his blood, obtained the Spirit, and thus confirmed the New Testament, he completed the institution of baptism, commanding to baptize all nations, not only the Jews, but the Gentiles also, in the name of the divine Trinity. We see this, Matt. xxviii. 19.

But when we say that the baptism of Christ and of John differed thus one from the other, we do not mean that there was an essential difference between them, as the Papists and Socinians assert. The Papists maintain that the waterbaptism of Christ accomplisheth and effects the thing itself, to wit, the washing away of sins, and that the baptism of John purified the body only, but not the soul, and only disposed a person to conversion. The Socinians ascribe no virtue at all to baptism, but think that the baptism of John was a necessary ecclesiastical duty for the Jews, as all the ecclesiastical duties of the churchlaw of Moses were; but that the baptism of Christ was a mere badge of the Christian church for a short time, in order to distinguish it from Jews and Gentiles, and that baptism is no longer necessary now, since the general establishment of Christianity. In opposition to this our church teaches, conformably to the word of God, that the waterbaptism of John and of Christ was essentially the same; for both have the same sign, to wit, water; the thing signified by the baptism of John was the grace of the Messiah, which is also signified by the baptism of Christ; for according to the words of Paul, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him, that is, on Christ Jesus; and they who heard him were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus," Acts xix. 4. The baptism of John was of divine institution, as well as that of Christ: "John was sent to baptize with water," John i. 33, "his baptism was from heaven," as Christ intimateth, Matt. xxi. 25. It is indeed true, that the baptism of John did not confer the thing signified, but Christ only; but the water baptism, instituted by Christ, confers not the thing signified neither, as will appear in the following Lord's day. When then the Socinians, who deny the signifying and sealing virtue of baptism, assert that baptism, since the general establishment of Christianity, is a matter of indifference, yea, that it is no longer necessary, they contradict the word of God, which teacheth that baptism is a sacrament for the whole church of the New Testament until the end of the world; for

Christ connects baptism with the preaching of the word, and promiseth his blessed presence with it for ever, when he saith to his ambassadours, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. "Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

The virtue of this institution consists herein, that the ambassadours of the Lord are obliged to baptize every penitent person with water, and to signify to him the washing away of sins by the blood and Spirit of Christ; and every penitent is by this same word obliged to suffer himself to be baptized in obedience to Christ, and must be led up thereby to the blood and Spirit of Christ, that he may be cleansed by them; therefore Ananias said to penitent Paul, Acts xxii. 16, "Why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." It was therefore a blamable disobedience of the scribes and Pharisees, that they would not suffer themselves to be baptized by John: by that disobedience "they rejected the counsel of God against themselves," as Jesus saith, Luke vii. 30.

2 But the word of the institution is not the only thing, that is necessary to render the use of the water a sacrament, but a word of promise must also be added to it, whereby the element, which becomes a sign by the institution, is made a seal also. This is beautifully expressed by the instructor in the sixty ninth question: "Christ hath added this promise to the institution of washing, that I am as certainly washed by his blood and Spirit from all the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as I am washed externally with water." Doth not Peter also teach us this, when he saith to the penitent Jews, Acts ii. 38, 39, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you?"

The instructor inquiring concerning the word of promise, asks, "Where hath Christ promised us, that he will as certainly wash us by his blood and Spirit, as we are washed with the water of baptism?" and he cites sundry passages, which prove this. The first is Matt. xxviii. 19, where Christ saith to his ambassadours, "Go ye, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." He showeth that the doctrine of the divine Trinity, and the grace of the Trinity, which each Person in the divine essence should bestow upon the nations, was the sum of all the doctrines, in which they should instruct the nations. Thus

Paul supplicated for the Corinthians in order that they might be saved, "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost," 2 Cor. xiii. 13. All this salvation is promised and sealed to the person, who is baptized, and thus also the washing away of sins. Since now baptism is a seal of the covenant of grace, in which God and man enter into an agreement, we will inquire wherein it consists to be baptized in the name of the divine Trinity. The Lord on his part receives the person, who is baptized, into covenant, and promises, grants, and seals to him all that grace, which we have mentioned. This is taught in a most emphatical and clear manner in the second part of our form of baptism, where it saith, "When we are baptized in the name of the Father, God the Father witnesseth and sealeth unto us, that he doth make an eternal covenant of grace with us," &c. When the Lord established his covenant with Abraham and his seed, he promised that he would be a God to him, and to his seed, and he sealed this to him by circumcision, Gen. xvii. 1—12. Peter having respect to this, saith, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost: for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call," Acts ii 38, 39. But when the Lord brings the person, who is baptized, in this manner, into the bond of the covenant, he inclines him to assent to the covenant, and to "yield himself to the Lord," 2 Chron. xxx. 8. He doth this, when he suffers himself to be baptized in the name of the Trinity, by which he surrenders himself to the Lord, in such a solemn sacrament, to be his, "and saith, yea, subscribes with his hand, I am the Lord's, and calls himself by the name of Jacob and Israel," that he may join himself to the people of the Lord, Isaiah xliv. 5. That this is done in baptism is intimated by Paul, 1 Cor. i. 13. "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul? that is, did ye declare in baptism that ye should belong to Paul? Yea, the person who is baptized obligeth himself in, and by this ceremony of baptism, to cleave to the Triune God alone, to trust in him, and love him, to seek salvation in him alone, to serve him alone, and to oppose whatsoever opposeth him. The Lord requires all this of the person, who enters into covenant with him, and the person, who enters into covenant with the Lord, consents to it with a perfect heart. He "avouches the Lord to be his God, and the Lord avouches him to be his peculiar property, and that he shall keep all his commandments," Deut. xxvi. 17, 18. This he confirms by this sacrament, as by an oath, "swearing, and purposing to per-

form his oath, that he will keep God's righteous judgments," as David acted, Psalm cxix. 106. And thus "he calls upon the name of the Lord" in accepting and confirming the covenant, when "he suffers himself to be baptized," with Paul, Acts xxii. 16. With this agrees another passage, which the instructor cites from Mark xvi. 16, where the Saviour saith, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." We enter by faith into the covenant, which promiseth the washing away of sins; the Lord confirms these promises of his by the seal of baptism, and the believer receiving this seal, protests that he will conduct himself worthily of the Lord, in consequence of the promises and the sealing of them; to which then the promise of salvation is annexed: not that baptism effects salvation by itself, and is therefore absolutely necessary, as the Papists teach; but we obtain salvation by faith, which embraceth Christ the Saviour and Mediator of the covenant, and baptism is the seal of it. Therefore the passage, Mark xvi. 16, doth not threaten the unbaptized with damnation, but the unbelieving, who despise Christ, and thus also his institution of baptism, like the Pharisees, Luke vii. 30.

The instructor proceeds and says, "This promise is also repeated, where the scripture calls baptism the washing of regeneration, and the washing away of sins." Thus Paul calls baptism, "the washing of regeneration," Titus iii. 5, and Ananias calls baptism, "the washing away of sins," Acts xxii. 15. Waterbaptism is so called, not because it regenerates a person, and washes away his sins, as the Papists erroneously conceive here, which we will show upon the twenty seventh Lord's day; but because it is a seal of regeneration, and the washing away of sins, by virtue of the divine promise, that the believer, who is baptized, is as truly regenerated, and cleansed from his sins by the blood and Spirit of Christ, as he is washed with water. And so baptism is called the washing away of sins by a sacramental phraseology, which ascribes the properties of the thing signified to the sign. That outward baptism doth not effect regeneration, and the washing away of sins this the apostle of the circumcision teacheth us, when he saith, 1 Peter iii. 21. "The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." He denies therefore that outward waterbaptism saves: but what is the answer of a good conscience toward God? A good conscience is that which is reconciled and pacified by the blood and perfect sacrifice of Christ, and which also exerciseth itself to a holiness that is acceptable to

God. See Heb. ix. 14. x. 2, 22. 1 Peter iii. 26. By the question, *eperotema* of this good conscience some understand a question asked in consequence of another persons question, or the condition which God proposeth to the person, who is baptized, in which he asks, whether he will maintain a good conscience toward God; and they say that God asks this question, when the person who is baptized asks whether he will be his God; or they understand by it an answer, or promise of maintaining a good conscience, which the person who is baptized makes to God.

Although this is a learned invention, it is nevertheless not altogether impertinent to observe, that it is not necessary to explain the word *eperotema*, a question, by a question asked in consequence of a foregoing question, or by a condition, answer or promise; we may take it for a simple question, by which the good conscience asks in prayer to God for his sealing grace; for it is of no importance here in what sense the word *eperotema* is used by certain writers, and how in the law; but how, and in what sense the holy writers use it. It is certain that this noun substantive, which is found in only one passage in the New Testament, is derived from the verb *eperotao*. We find this verb fifty and nine times in the New Testament; it is translated once to desire, thrice to inquire, and fifty and five times to ask, according to Trommius's concordance. And doth this word ever denote a question, asked in consequence of another person's question, it doth not proceed from the nature of the word, as being compounded of two words, but because the connexion of the foregoing words requires it, as we see in the simple, uncompounded verb *erotao*, Matt. xxi. 24, 25. Luke xx. 3. 4, xxii. 67, 68. But in these words of Peter we find no foregoing question, to which the question in the text should refer. Further, we cannot easily connect the words, "a good conscience," with the words, "to God;" but we can easily refer the word "question," to the words "to God," and so the good conscience of the believer, who is baptized, asks in prayer, Father, wilt thou not give me now that necessary grace which thou hast promised? wilt thou not wash away my sins? hast thou not been satisfied for all mine iniquity, and hath not all that salvation been purchased for me? didst not thou thyself declare it, when thou raisedst thy Son, my Surety from the dead, when thou dischargedst him from his prison, when thou justifiedst him in the Spirit, and gavest him thus an acquittance, witnessing that thou wast satisfied? hast thou not now assured me of this, and sealed it to me by baptism? This agrees also exceedingly well with the words of Peter, when he calls this question a baptism by a sacramental phrase, which

ascribes the name of the sign to the thing signified; and this baptism saveth us, because the answer of a good conscience toward God is the act of faith, which seeks salvation in God through Christ, raised from the dead.

5. Therefore baptism is a most precious and holy institution, given by God to his church; consequently we must beware that we do not profane it, with respect to its circumstances of persons, time, or place.

1. The Papists, who make a great ado about waterbaptism, and seek the holiness and virtue of baptism only in the act of sprinkling with water, as though that washed away sins, and salvation depended thereon; think that a woman, yea, that any other person hath a right to administer baptism in a case of necessity; but this is a profanation of baptism, and of the institution of the Lord; for Christ committed the administration of baptism only to the ministers of the word, when he said to his apostles, "Teach all nations, and baptize them," Matt. xviii. 19. They are "servants of Christ, and thus stewards of the mysteries of God," 1 Cor. iv, 1. Will no man dare to stamp and seal any thing with the seal of the prince, unless he be commissioned for that purpose, and shall a woman then, or any other human being presume to apply the seal of God to a person, who hath entered into covenant with him? Did Zipporah venture to do this, Exod. iv. 24, 25, 26, we ought not to imitate her in that action; for she did not do it agreeably to the divine command, but hastily, and in boisterous anger. God, who would slay Moses, because he had not circumcised his Son, forbore to do it, because his son was circumcised, but not on account of the circumstances of the action, for they were sinful, because the woman acted with so little deliberation, and so precipitately. Moses, the prophet of the Lord, was present: but will the Papists permit a woman to baptize, when a priest is at hand? I judge not. Baptism was however not so restrained to the apostles, that the ordinary preachers of the gospel had no right to administer it, and therefore they also baptized: surely not like laymen, as the Papists assert, but as called to the office of preachers. We see it in Philip and Ananias, Acts. viii. 12, 38. ix. 10—18.

The Papists are not only guilty of presumption in permitting any person to baptize, but they are also guilty of profaneness in administering baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity to bells, in order to consecrate them, that they may lay storms, expel the devil and diabolical apparitions, and deliver souls out of purgatory. To what hath the Romish whore and mother of whoredoms and of abominations not apostatized? Jesus hath not taught us to baptize bells, but

"nations," Matt. xxviii. 19, and therefore human creatures; but we may not baptize human creatures in general, they must first "be taught and discipled," according to the institution of Christ, Matt. xxviii. 19. and they must consequently have entered into covenant with God, and believe, according to Mark xvi. 15, they must be able to profess their faith, like the Eunuch, Acts viii. 36, 37, 38, and exercise it by the answer of a good consience; for baptism is a seal of the covenant When Christ saith that we must baptize all nations, he shows that baptism is not a privilege of any one nation in particular as circumcision was the advantage of the Jews; The New Testament should introduce all nations to fellowship with God, and baptism, the sacrament of the New Testament, should seal them. We shall inquire on the next Lord's day, whether we may baptize children.

2. As the difference of places hath ceased under the New Testament, therefore baptism is also not confined to any particular place. The ancients sometimes made use of the burying-places of the Christians, especially of the martyrs for this purpose, to which some refer, 1 Cor. xv. 29, but erroneously; for that custom had not taken place in Paul's time. They left off at length baptizing on the graves, because it savoured of superstition. John, Christ, the apostles and evangelists baptized wherever it was convenient, and especially where they preached; but the church being at length reduced to a settled condition, it was judged proper to baptize in the congregation of the people. This is also commendable, inasmuch as baptism must be joined to the word, and is an incorporation into the church.

3. It is thus also with respect to the time of administering baptism. Children were indeed circumcised on the eighth day under the Old Testament, but as the ceremonial difference of times is now abolished, we are not therefore bound any longer to a particular time for administering baptism. We cannot approve of the conduct of the ancients, who, from an erroneous opinion, that baptism washed away all past sins, deferred it until the end of their lives, and baptized persons on their sickbeds, neither can we approve of their setting apart the festivals of Easter, and Whitsuntide for this purpose; for this agrees not with the spirituality of the New Testament church. John the Baptist, the apostles and evangelists baptized persons as soon as they believed, and confessed their faith: otherwise the most proper time for baptizing is when the congregation is assembled, although we might also observe other seasons for baptizing in times of persecution and other inconveniencies.

After baptism hath been once rightly administered, we may not repeat it, and use it often: for baptism being a sacrament of regeneration and of incorporation into the church, both of which take take place only once, it is not necessary to repeat it, as it is to repeat the Lord's supper, which being a sacrament of nourishment and of confirmation, must therefore be often received. It is with these sacraments, as it was with the ordinary sacraments of the Old Testament, circumcision and the passover; for baptism is come in the stead of circumcision, which was administered but once, and the Lord's supper was instituted in the stead of the passover, which used to be repeated yearly; but when the essentials of baptism have not been rightly observed by baptizing in the name of the Trinity, and when that fundamental article of the faith is denied, as is done by the Socinians, then we must look upon such a baptism as no baptism, and we must re-baptize those who have been so baptized, when they repent, believe in the Triune God, and confess him. Whether the Mennonites do ill, when they re-baptize those whom we and others have baptized in their youth, this belongs to the controversy about infantbaptism: but of that we will speak on the twenty-seventh Lord's day.

APPLICATION.

What think ye now, hearers, is it not a great blessing, that the Lord God hath given baptism to his church for a sacrament? surely yes. That the Triune God should receive the sinner into such a well ordered covenant, and unite him to himself, that each Person should contribute his part to favour him, to cleanse and wash him from his sins for ever, and should thus set his heart upon him with an admirable love, this is an inconceivable grace: but it surpasseth even this, that he should join to this grace not only his word, but also this sacrament, that he may render this grace clear and lively to him, yea, even assure him of it, and seal it to him, that he may render his joy and comfort complete. The word of God would have been sufficient to confirm the believing sinner, as it is infallible; but "God willing to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong cosolation," Heb. vi. 17, 18. Behold, in this

manner doth God assist the unbelief of those whom he favours, and as if this were yet too little, he adds to his word and oath also this pledge and seal, that their souls may be confirmed. Abraham and his seed "received indeed the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith," agreeably to the words of Paul, Rom. iv. 11, but that righteousness was not yet actually procured by the Surety, "Christ behooved yet to suffer, and enter into his glory" for that purpose. Circumcision sealed to them indeed that he would surely procure this righteousness, and that they were already justified by its reflex virtue; but what a bloody and painful seal was it to them! but baptism seals now with great ease to the baptized believer that the everlasting righteousness is procured, and that he is dead, buried, and risen with Christ according to the text. And therefore baptized believers enjoy now a much better condition than the believing fathers of the Old Testament enjoyed.

"Paul asked the twelve disciples at Ephesus, who had been baptized with the baptism of John, whether they had received the Holy Ghost?" Acts xix. 2. He spake of the Holy Ghost, who was communicated in those times to believers in a great and extraordinary measure. Without doubt all of you have been baptized; but may we not ask you also, have ye received the Holy Ghost to wash away your sins by the blood of Christ? Surely all those who have been outwardly baptized with water, have not been baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Simon the sorcerer was also baptized but "he had neither part nor lot in this matter; for his heart was not right in the sight of God; but he was in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity," as Peter upbraided him, Acts viii. 21, 23. Are there not also many among you, who have never partaken of the benefit signified by baptism? what dost thou and thou think? if thou hadst truly entered into covenant with God, and if thy sins were washen away by the blood and Spirit of Christ, wouldest thou then wallow so in sin, and in excess of riot? wouldest thou wholly forget that thou wast cleansed from thy old sins, and wouldest thou not keep thy garments clean? Suppose that thou art not one of the vilest sinners, but civil, and eminently devout, and that thou hast a zeal for God, but hast not yet the Spirit of regeneration, nor the hidden man of the heart, is thy baptism then indeed aught more than "a putting away of the filthiness of the flesh, which doth not save," as Peter saith, 1 Peter iii. 21. "Is not he a Jew, who is only one outwardly and in the flesh, but he who is one inwardly," as Paul speaks, Rom. ii. 28, 29. Is he then truly a Christian, who hath been

only outwardly baptized? I deem not: it will also appear more fully on the following Lord's day.

Do ye ask, who those are then, who have partaken of the true baptism, and of the thing signified? we say,

1. That they are concerned and distressed about the uncleanness of their sins. God the Lord, when he brings them into his covenant, gives them his Spirit, who discovers their guilt, and loathsome filthiness to them, whereby they obtain not only a general apprehension, that they are sinners, as well as others; but they also see their sins, this and that sin in particular, and the great multitude of their sins and their guilt, and unsightly filthiness, with shame, detestation and a loathing of themselves. No leper can be so affected with his contagious uncleanness, as the true subjects of baptism are with their sinfulness. This is not a fiction of our own brain, but the Lord himself teacheth it us in his word, as a promise of his covenant, and as the thing signified by baptism, when he saith, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 31. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations." Those whom John baptized "confessed their sins," Matt. iii. 6. And they are affected thus, not only when they are first convinced, but seeing a great deficiency of sanctification in themselves, they are also afterwards often seized with shame and an abhorrence of themselves. See 2 Chron. xxx. 15. Job xlii. 6. Psalm xxxviii and li. Isaiah vi. 5. Rom. vii.

2. If there were nothing more than this, it would not be a perfect evidence of that baptism which saveth; but since by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better, there ariseth therefore presently a wonderful desire to be cleansed: sin and the filth of it is irksome to them in the extreme, and therefore they have an exceedingly vehement desire to be cleansed from it; the soul finds no rest, until she hath been purified in the fountain of Christ's blood by his Spirit: therefore she betakes herself to him, unites herself to him, applies his blood and sufferings to her, and cries unto him with David, Psalm li. 2, 7. "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." To this purpose also is the saying of the wise man, Prov. xxii. 11. "He that loveth pureness of heart, the king shall be his friend."

3. He who hath truly partaken of baptism, as a seal of the washing away of his sins, hath also actually and really entered into cove-

nant with God upon his c ll and invitation. It doth not suffice him, that his parents and witnesses have dedicated him to God, but he abides also by what they transacted, he confirms the promise, which they made for him to the Lord, he consents cheerfully to that precious covenant, the lustre of which beams on him, and he surrenders himself in it to the Lord, not only that he may have him for his God, and may obtain of him the benefits of the covenant, but also in order to serve him, and to do his will in all things heartily and without exception. He doth this with a willing heart, and he repeats this action often, because he can never do it with as much heartiness and zeal as he wishes. That those who are sealed by God do this appears from the religious custom of God's people, who renewed again and again their covenant with the God of their fathers. See this Exod. xix. 24. Deut. xxvi. 29. 2 Chron. xv. Neh. ix and x. David "swore therefore, and would perform it, that he would keep God's righteous judgments," Psalm cxix. 106. "John preached the baptism of repentance," according to Mark i. 4, but baptism is unto repentance, because by entering into covenant with God we turn from sin to God, in order to oblige ourselves to serve him, and to devote ourselves to his service.

4. The person who partakes of the grace of baptism, is also exceedingly desirous of an assurance, that he is truly a favourite of God. We know that all true believers do not alway possess an assurance of their good condition; but they are nevertheless habitually desirous of possessing assurance on indisputable grounds: therefore they search the word of God, that they may learn what are the infallible evidences, that a person is in a state of grace: it is also their daily work to observe their mind and conversation, that they may perceive whether they truly correspond with that word; they look to the sacrament, that it may confirm them. All this affords them at times indeed a certain measure of light and enlargement, but no perfect assurance, until the Holy Spirit connects his working and sealing with it, that he may enable them to "know the things that are freely given them of God, and may bear witness with their spirits, that they are the children of God," as Paul speaks, 1 Cor. ii, 12. Rom. viii. 16. Their souls are set upon this, they pray to him for it, and cry anxiously with David, "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation," Psalm xxxv. 3. "Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit," Psalm li. 8, 12. Others concern themselves little about assurance, they

only suppose that their condition is good, and they depend entirely on an ungrounded hope.

Hearers, examine your hearts by these tokens, and see whether they can be found in you? Are ye utter strangers to them? do ye not know them, and do ye not concern yourselves about them? know then that your baptism is nothing but "a putting away of the filthiness of the flesh, which will not save you" And O that this might once awaken you, so that ye might see your sad plight, that ye might bewail it, and cry out with the leper, "Unclean, unclean," Lev. xiii. 45, that, as Peter admonished Simon after his baptism, ye might "repent of your wickedness and pray God, if perhaps the thoughts of your hearts might be forgiven you."

But, friends of God, with whom these things are found in truth, who neither dare nor may deny them, conduct worthily of the grace which hath been shown to you. And therefore,

1. Believe now that all this great grace hath been sealed to you, that ye are God's covenant people, partakers of all that salvation, which the Father, Son and Holy Ghost bestows on believers, and that ye are cleansed from your sins in the blood of the Lamb. Ye have certain evidences of it, your baptism hath assured you of it, and sealed it to you, the Holy Ghost hath instamped his mark on it; ye ought not then so often to reject your good hope upon every conceit, and indulge unbelief. Or do ye imagine that the baptism which was administered to you in your childhood is of too long a standing, and that it is too far spent, so that ye cannot improve it to your comfort, or that it hath been rendered ineffectual, and that ye are become as it were unbaptized through your sinful backslidings, and that ye obtained grace too long after your baptism, to derive any support from it now? Have ye not then actually, and indeed cleaved to that word and covenant, in which your parents and others dedicated you? hath not the Lord, in virtue of that covenant and of that baptism, kept his eye on you, and, in consequence of it, influenced your souls, and brought you indeed under the bond of the covenant? How beautifully do the words of the form of baptism in the third part apply here! "And if we sometimes through weakness fall into sin, we must not therefore despair of God's mercy, nor continue in sin, since baptism is a seal, and undoubted testimony, that we have an eternal covenant of grace with God." Let the soul therefore support herself by looking upon herself as certified and sealed, in consequence of her baptism. This Paul required; for when he had said that we are baptized into the death of Christ, buried and risen with him, he adds, "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed

unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ," Rom. vi 11.

2. Thank and praise the Triune God for favouring you thus. It is a great grace that hath been bestowed on you, as we have shown before. Ought not then all that is within you to praise and magnify his name to the utmost?" "Unto him," saith John, Rev. i 5, 6, "that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever" It is your duty to devote yourselves wholly to his praise and to his service, that ye may conduct yourselves worthily of his great kindness: ye were obliged to this in your baptism, and ye have surrendered yourselves for this purpose in his covenant. We must exhibit this once more to you from our form of baptism, which saith to you, "Whereas in all covenants there are contained two parts; therefore are we by God through baptism, admonished of, and obliged unto new obedience, namely, that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost; that we trust in him, and love him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength, that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life." Will ye not hold to this obligation, under which ye were brought long since? Surely ye will: let it then appear in all your conversation. "The woman, who was a great sinner, loved much, because her sins, which were many, were forgiven," Luke vii. 47. It behooves you then also to show the power of a great love to the Lord by doing all things, in order to serve him: beware especially of defiling yourselves again with that filth, from which ye have been washen. Would ye bathe and plunge yourselves in that sink, which overflowed the Son of God to his bitter sorrow? It was necessary that Jesus should be "baptized" with blood, that he might baptize you with water and with his Spirit," and "how was he straitened, till it was accomplished?" Luke xii. 50. Would ye then seek your pleasure therein, and afflict him with new sorrows? or "shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid: how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized in Jesus, were baptized into his death?" &c. See Rom. vi. 1—6. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God," according to 2 Cor. vii. 1.

3. Make now a profitable use of baptism, in order to obtain, according to that seal of the covenant, all sealed grace of the Lord, the God of the covenant. Have ye defiled and polluted yourselves with sin, there is "a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness," Zech. xiii.

1, Have ye need of strength for your duty, there is "help laid upon one who is mighty," Psalm lxxxix. 19. Doth your soul desire wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, your Surety is made all this to you of God, 1 Cor. i. 30. Do ye seek any divine "grace, love and communion," the Triune God hath undertaken to bestow it upon you, 2 Cor. xiii. 13. Let your souls seek it only of him, urging him and pleading upon the ground of the unchangeable and sealed covenant, established in the death and resurrection of Christ. In this manner must we often conduct with the answer of a good conscience toward God; for this is the baptism that saveth, 1 Peter iii. 21.

4. But consider also that baptism connects you with your fellow-christian, who is baptized as well as ye are: "We are all baptized by one Spirit into one body?" as Paul saith, 1 Cor. xii. 13. Let therefore a strict union with one another be discerned among you, being all of one heart, and one soul in your apprehensions, in grace, peace and love: this the same apostle requireth of you, when he saith, Eph. iv. 3—6. "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism: one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

5. Finally, when the Lord will baptize you with blood, and calls you to resist unto blood, and to surrender your bodies to death for his name, do not then by any means draw back; ye must submit willingly to be "baptized with the baptism, wherewith Christ was baptized," Mark x. 31. Would ye then draw back, when Jesus willingly suffered himself to be baptized for you? Yea, do we not oblige ourselves by baptism to lay down even our lives for the Lord, when he requires it of us for his name? How can we otherwise suffer ourselves to be "baptized for the dead," according to 1 Cor. xv. 29? "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive" to the church of Smyrna, Rev. ii. 8, 10.

In the mean while ye have great reason to rejoice, that ye have been baptized in the name of the Lord. Behold how the Ethiopian, and the jailer rejoiced, after they were baptized, Acts viii. 39. xvi. 34. So much the more because the Lord will cleanse you perfectly, in consequence of your having been sealed by baptism, "that he may present you to himself a glorious church, not having spot or

wrinkle, or any such thing; but holy and without blemish," Eph. v. 27. His name, which was put on you in baptism, shall remain on you, and beam forth with far greater lustre; for "ye shall see his face, and his name shall be in your foreheads," according to Rev. xxii. 4. How will ye walk in state before his face in glory, clothed with white raiment, like priests, kings and conquerors, having his name, and he having your name! Hear him say himself, Rev. iii. 4, 5. "They who have not defiled their garments shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels," Amen.

ERROURS

CONCERNING BAPTISM REFUTED.

XXVII. LORD'S DAY.

1 Peter iii. 21. The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth now also save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Q. 72. *Is then the external baptism with water the washing away of sin itself?*

A. Not at all; for the blood of Jesus Christ only, and the Holy Ghost cleanses from all sin.

Q. 73. *Why then doth the Holy Ghost call baptism "the washing of regeneration, and the washing away of sins?"*

A. God speaks not thus without great cause, to wit, not only thereby to teach us, that as the filth of the body is purged away by water, so our sins are removed by the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ; but especially, that by this divine pledge and sign he may assure us, that we are spiritually cleansed from our sins as really, as we are externally washed with water.

Q. 74. *Are infants also to be baptized?*

A. Yes, for since they, as well as the adult, are included in the covenant and church of God; and since redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised

to them no less than to the adult; they must therefore by baptism, as a sign of the covenant, be also admitted into the Christian church; and be distinguished from the children of infidels, as was done in the old covenant or testament by circumcision, instead of which, baptism is instituted in the new covenant.

"THINE ears shall hear a voice behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left," saith the Lord to his church, Isaiah xxx. 21. God hath given to man his law and his word to be a right rule of faith and practice, that man may direct his goings by them: but the heart of man is so blinded by sin, that "it turneth him aside, so that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" Isaiah xliv. 20. Is he not pleased with one side, he turns to the other, to the right hand, or to the left, he will believe and do either too much, or too little: we see this in the Jews, one while they depend altogether upon the sacrifices, as though they satisfied the Lord with them for their guilt, and as though "he ate the flesh of bulls, and drank the blood of goats," Psalm l. 13, and at other times they thought that they were neither necessary, nor useful; therefore "they robbed the Lord in tithes and offerings, and said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinance?" Mal. iii. 8, 14. The Pharisees did not conduct differently from this, when they were exceedingly zealous and superstitious with respect to small matters, but negligent and careless of great matters: "They paid tithe of mint, anise and cummin; but omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith," as the Saviour upbraids them, Matt. xxiii. 23. Do not our adversaries, hearers, conduct in the same manner with respect to the doctrine of baptism, when one ascribes too much to baptism, saying that the outward water washes away sin, and another ascribes too little, as though it had no manner of relation to sin, and were no more than a bare sign of a Christian profession, and as if it were not necessary to baptize the children of the covenant people of God?

Therefore the Lord, desiring that his words should be profitable to his church, "who walks in a right way," causeth her to "hear the word, which saith to her, This is the way, walk ye therein," when erroneous persons endeavour to turn her aside "to the right hand, or to the left." And, beloved, is not this scripture fulfilled to day in your ears," when the instructor proclaims to you, according to the word of God, that only the blood and Spirit of Christ washes

away sins, and that we ought to baptize infants; for if we observe this middle way, we will not turn aside either to the right hand, or to the left.

It appears therefore, that there are two particulars with respect to baptism in this Lord's day, which require our exposition:

I. The efficacy of waterbaptism. Question 72, 73.

II. Infant baptism. Question 74.

I. We will not busy ourselves here with the Socinians and Mennonites, who deny that the sacrament of baptism is of any efficacy, and fancy that baptism is only a bare sign of Christianity, and that it is no seal, contrary to the nature of the sacraments, which become seals by the word of promise; but we will attend now only to the Papists, who ascribe too great an efficacy to waterbaptism, and say that the outward washing with water is the washing away of sin: in opposition to which we teach that "only the blood and Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ washeth away sins."

In order that we may discuss only the subject of the controversy, and may not engage in a mere strife about words, we will exhibit the doctrine of the Papists, that we may attack it to better advantage. We need not burthen them above measure, and charge them with teaching that the water in baptism is changed into the blood and Spirit of Christ, as they speak concerning the signs in the supper; no, they do not think thus: but they ascribe to the sign of water, and to the outward use of it, even to the work itself, without any act of faith, a power to wash away sin, and to effect regeneration, and to impress an indelible mark on the soul, qualifying her for the service of God, and rendering her conformable to Christ; whereby then the sins, which the baptized person hath before baptism, whether original or actual, are wholly washen away, yea, so entirely, that nothing remaineth in him, that can render him guilty, and that therefore unbaptized infants are not saved, but are sent to a porch of hell, where they experience neither sorrow nor joy; and therefore every person may and must baptize in a case of necessity, when there is no priest at hand; for baptism is, according to them, absolutely necessary, the want of baptism can however be compensated and supplied by the sacrament of penance, by a desire to be baptized, and by the baptism of blood, to wit, martyrdom. In this manner are sins before baptism taken away, but they leave sins committed after baptism to confirmation, and to satisfying in their own persons in and after this life.

But the Popish doctors do not explain in the same way how the water washes away sins. The Dominicans assert that there is an

instrumental, effectual power in the water of baptism, to produce a good disposition in the soul, which effects that she receives grace. This is opposed by the Franciscans, who think that there is no such power in the water, but that God hath connected grace with the water of baptism by his promise, in such a manner, that all who are baptized with the baptismal water obtain the grace of God, and all who are not baptized remain without that grace. But this opinion of the Franciscans doth not prevail so generally in the Romish church, as the opinion of the Dominicans; for the opinion of the Franciscans agrees too well with the sentiments of the Lutherans to be acceptable; for the Lutherans also teach that the water in baptism is, as it were, a divine hand and vehicle, which conveys grace to the soul.

In opposition to this we teach that nothing but the blood and Spirit of Christ washes away sins, and that the water hath only a power to signify and seal that grace; that the unbaptized children of persons, who are in covenant with God, may possess grace, and when they die, be saved; that the want of baptism doth not damn a person, but the contempt of it; and that baptism is indeed necessary on account of the divine institution of it, but not because it works grace.

He who hath eyes to see, and ears to hear what the Spirit saith in his word, will indeed perceive that the doctrine of the Romanists cannot consist with the word of God, as the doctrine of the Reformed church doth. For,

1. The water in baptism is material, lifeless and irrational, and consequently it cannot work grace, which is wrought in a spiritual, lively and rational manner, in the spiritual, living and rational soul; and therefore the scripture denies that the water in baptism works grace. Observe what the text saith, "Baptism saveth, not that which is the putting away of the filth of the flesh." John the Baptist, explaining baptism, saith, Matt. iii. 11, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." There is no reason, why washing and sprinkling should be of more efficacy now, than they were under the Old Testament, when they were also sacramental signs, yet "they could not sanctify as pertaining to the conscience, but only to the purifying of the flesh," as Paul teacheth, Heb. ix. 9, 10, 13. "Was it impossible, that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins," as the same apostle speaks, Heb. x. 4, it is then also impossible that the water should do this. The Papists think that the water can take away sins, as well as Peter's shadow, and

Paul's handkerchiefs and aprons could remove sicknesses and expel evil spirits, Acts v. 15, 16. xix. 11, 12, but then baptism would also work such an unusual miracle, women and all who baptized would work miracles. Did that shadow, those handkerchiefs, and aprons work those miracles then by an instrumental power? surely those things did nothing, but God alone, immediately by those things, upon the faith and prayers of Peter and Paul: let the Papists prove to us that Peter's shadow, and Paul's handkerchiefs and aprons wrought grace in the souls of those persons, and we will see whether it will help them at all to prove that the water washes away sins.

2. The washing away of sins is effected only by the blood and Spirit of Christ We must believe that great ambassadour of the cross, Paul, who tells us this, 1 Cor. vi. 11. "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Thus he teacheth us also, Tit. iii. 5. Heb. ix. 14. Peter and John are of the same mind, 1 Peter, i. 18, 19. 1 John i. 7. Rev. 1, 5. Do we not therefore deny the doctrine of the apostles, when we ascribe the washing away of sins to the water? I conceive that we do. The Papist thinks not, because he will connect the blood of Christ with the water; this, saith he, hath merited that such a great power should accompany the water of baptism: but the blood of Christ doth not then wash away sins, as the apostles say, but the water, and Christ will become the servant of the water, and will have suffered so much for that.

3. Whatever baptism doth toward the washing away of sins is merely of a sacramental nature, signifying and sealing, on account of the word of institution and of promise, the washing away of sins by the blood and Spirit of Christ, which is, and is supposed before baptism. The apostle saith that "Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith, which," (mark well) "he had, being yet uncircumcised," Rom. iv. 11. Peter required that the Jews, who were concerned, should "repent," and then "be baptized, because the promise was to them," Acts ii. 38, 39. Faith, by which we obtain the forgiveness of sins, was required of the Eunuch, before Philip would baptize him, Acts viii. 36—38.

4. We add to this, that some persons have been baptized, who did not receive grace in baptism, as we may see in Judas. "Simon the sorcerer was also baptized, but he was, and continued in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity," Acts viii. 13, 23. Water did not then wash away his sins. Others have obtained grace without baptism, we see this in the penitent thief, who died on the cross, Luke xxiii. 42, 43, with which therefore also the opinion that unbap-

tized persons cannot be saved, and that baptism is also absolutely necessary, falls to the ground.

5. Would we have more? the most unmerciful consequences follow from the doctrine of the Papists; for they deny that the children of persons who are in covenant with God, if they die unbaptized, obtain eternal happiness, although they are partakers of the promises: it also follows from their doctrine, that the efficacy of baptism doth not depend upon the good intention of the person who baptizeth, which the Papists nevertheless teach, or otherwise he can render the virtue of the water inefficacious; the persons who are baptized can say that they have no sins, contrary to 1 John i. 8, and they need not therefore humble themselves on account of their original sin, with David. Psalm li. 5.

Though the doctrine of the Papists is so absurd, they will nevertheless maintain it, and they imagine that they are able, because the Holy Ghost calls baptism "the washing of regeneration, and the washing away of sins." Thus speaks the instructor. In these words he hath an eye to Titus iii. 5, where it is said, "He hath saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." They quote also the words of Ananias, when he was about to baptize Paul, Acts xxii. 16, "Be baptized, and wash away thy sins." But who will say that he speaks there of water-baptism. Baptism doth indeed wash away sins, because the blood and Spirit of Christ belong to it, as the things signified by it: but water-baptism, considered in itself, which is the subject of the present controversy, doth not wash away sin; we have proved this from 1 Peter iii. 21. And although it were even so, that the Holy Ghost calls water-baptism the washing of regeneration, and the washing away of sins, the popish opinion doth not however follow from those phrases; "for God speaks thus not without great cause," not in order to teach us that the water washes away sins, but to teach us, according to the usual sacramental phraseology, that the water in baptism is, by the word of institution, a sign of the washing away of sin; for, "as the filth of the body is purged away by water, so our sins are removed by the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ." God the Lord teacheth us also by the baptismal water, which he calls the washing of regeneration, and the washing away of sins, on account of the word of promise, that it is a seal, a divine pledge and sign, to assure us that we are spiritually cleansed from our sins, as really, as we are externally washed with water." And thus the working and efficacy of the thing signified is, with great propriety, ascribed

to the sign, according to the nature of the sacraments, agreeably to what we have taught on the twenty-fifth Lord's Day.

The Papists insist still more on John iii. 5, where our Saviour saith, "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Our adversaries conclude from this passage that we are born again of water; but how shall we prove that the Saviour speaks there of proper water, used in baptism? Will any one conclude that Christ baptizes with proper fire, because John saith, Matt. iii. 11, "He that cometh after me shall baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire?" No, but he will say that Jesus baptizeth with the Holy Ghost, who is like fire in his manner of operation; why then should we not say on John iii. 5, that we must be born again of the Holy Ghost, who is like water in his manner of operation, since the Holy Ghost is often likened to water? And although the Son of God did speak in that passage of the baptismal water, doth that oblige us to say that the baptismal water is as effectual in working regeneration, as the Holy Ghost is? I know not that any man would dare to say this; at least it is not contained in that passage, but only that regeneration, which is wrought by the Holy Ghost, and is signified and sealed in Baptism, is necessary.

In this manner do the Papists turn to the right hand, when they superstitiously ascribe too much to Baptism; but the Mennonites and Socinians turn to the left, when, denying original sin, they ascribe too little to baptism, as though it were only an outward sign of Christianity, and therefore they say that we ought not to baptize any children. Although we will not baptize all children, as those of Jews, Heathens, Turks, and such as are born of parents who have been excommunicated out of the church, we must, nevertheless baptize the children of persons, who are in covenant with God; which we prove, not from the tradition of the church, as the Papists would do, imagining, to the dishonour of the word of God, that we cannot prove infant-baptism therefrom; but from the divine word itself, which affords us the only foundation for the baptism of infants. The instructor produceth several proofs from the word.

1. He saith that "children, as well as adults, are included in the covenant of God." That this is so, appears herefrom, that God established his covenant with Abraham, and with his seed, Gen. xvii. 7. Peter having respect to this, saith that "the promise was" not only to the parents, but also "to their children," Acts ii. 38, 39. And thus children, and their believing parents are both called holy, 1 Cor. vii. 14. And so children must be baptized; for baptism is a sign and seal of the covenant, and therefore children, as well as the

elder covenant people, were to be circumcised under the Old Testament, as the Lord commanded Abraham. Gen. xvii. 9—14. Why then should not the children of the covenant be baptized also? Peter required that the elder covenant people should repent and be baptized, because the promise of the covenant belonged to them; the promise of the covenant belongs to the children also, according to his infallible words: therefore they ought to be baptized with their parents.

2. "Children, as well as adults, are included in the church of God," saith the catechism. This is true; for when the Lord commands, Joel ii. 16, that they should "gather the people, and sanctify the congregation," he reckons among the congregation not only "the elders, the bridegroom and the bride, but also the children, and those who suck the breasts." It follows from this, that we must baptize children, who belong to the congregation (or church,) because baptism is a sacrament of, and for incorporation into the church: for when the three thousand were baptized on the feast of Pentecost, "they were added to the church," Acts ii. 41.

3. To this the instructor adds that "redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, and by the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised no less to children than to adults." Is not this true? the promise belongs to them, Acts ii. 39. It deserves our consideration what promise is meant. Is it not the promise of the covenant of redemption by the blood and Spirit of Christ? "The remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost," saith Peter, Acts ii. 38. In order to confirm the promise to children, Christ called them to him, and ordered that they should be brought to him. he said that "the kingdom of God was theirs, he embraced them, laid his hands upon them, and blessed them," Mark x. 13—16. Ought not children then to be baptized? may we not say here also from Acts x. 47. "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we?"

4. It is further added, that "the children of persons in covenant must be distinguished from the children of infidels." Our adversaries allow that adult believers are distinguished from infidels by baptism, as a sign of Christianity: but is there not also a difference between the children of believers, and of infidels? I conceive that there is, and that according to Paul, who saith that the children of infidels are unclean, but those of believers holy, 1 Cor. vii. 14. Must they not now be distinguished, as well as the adult, from the children of infidels by a solemn sign? Was not this done under the Old Testament by circumcision? Why then not now by baptism?

5. This proof is still more clear, if we observe with the instructor that "baptism was instituted in the stead of circumcision." That this is certain, appears hence, that circumcision, the sacrament of children, being abolished, it was necessary that another sacrament should come in the stead of it, otherwise the privileges of the New Testament would be less than those of the Old Testament. Christ hath also instituted two sacraments in the stead of the two ordinary sacraments of the Old Testament: now it is evident, that the Lord's supper hath come in the stead of the passover, of the remains of which the supper was celebrated. What can we think now more readily, and on better grounds, than that baptism hath come in the stead of circumcision? Paul teacheth us this also, Coll. ii. 11, 12. "Ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein ye are also risen with him." The Colossians being by nature sinners of the Gentiles, but converted to Christ, had not been circumcised. The false apostles required that the converts from Gentilism should be circumcised: Paul strenuously opposing this, warns the converted Colossians against those seducers, that they might not suffer themselves to be "spoiled after the rudiments of the world," vrs. 8. The rudiments of the world are the law of ceremonies, and particularly circumcision, by which they were obliged to keep the whole law of ceremonies, Gal. v. 3. He assigns two reasons of this, first, that they were perfect in Christ, and therefore had no need of those rudiments, vrs 9, 10. The other reason is, that they were partakers of the thing signified by circumcision: the circumcision made without hands, vrs. 11. If they asked, Why they might not then receive the sign of circumcision, since they had the thing signified? the apostle informs them, that they had received, in stead of that sign, the sign of baptism, which signified the same thing with circumcision, "having been buried with Christ in baptism," vrs. 12. From which it therefore appears very clearly, that baptism is come in the stead of circumcision. It is therefore certain, that the children of persons in covenant must be baptized, since the children of those, who were in covenant under the Old Testament, were to be circumcised It avails nothing against this, that then children ought to be baptized just on the eighth day, as they were circumcised on that day; for this was a circumstance for that time, which determined in many respects the time of uncleanness for women and children, to wit, how long they should be considered as unclean. Neither can it be objected against the proof for infant baptism from circumcision,

that circumcision signified only the inheritance of the land of Canaan, which doth not belong to us; for circumcision was a sign of the covenant, that the Lord was the God of Abraham and of his seed, of which Canaan was a special pledge, and the place where he woul reveal himself, as the God of Israel, See Gen. xvii. 7—14. And so circumcision was according to Paul's description of it. Rom. iv. 11, "a sign and seal of the righteousness of faith," and it had therefore the same signifying and sealing virtue that baptism hath.

But what do our adversaries object against infant-baptism?

1. Christ hath said, Matt. xxviii. 19. "Teach all nations, baptizing them." We must first teach the nations, and then baptize them; we cannot teach infants, therefore we must not baptize them, but must defer their baptism, until they have been taught, and have made a confession of their faith. We answer, that passage relates to adult christianized Jews and Gentiles, whom we may not baptize, until they have been taught, and professed their faith, in order to their receiving of the seal of it; but it doth not follow therefrom, that we may not baptize any children, but rather that we ought to baptize them, inasmuch as they are received into the covenant of God with their parents, who enter into that covenant, when they suffer themselves to be baptized, as we have seen from Gen. xvii. 7—14. Acts ii. 38, 39.

2. Our opponents say further, that there is no command to baptize children. But shall we not admit women to the Lord's supper, because that is no where expressly ordered? There is no need of any command, where there are so many reasons. We are commanded to baptize persons in covenant with God' Acts ii. 38. 39. The command to baptize children is comprehended in the command of circumcision, inasmuch as baptism is come in the stead of circumcision; and there ought to have been a prohibition, and reasons ought to have been assigned, why, after the sacrament of children had been abolished, children might not now have a sacrament.

3. They say, there is no example, that the apostles baptized children. But have all things, even to the least circumstance been recorded? see John xxi. 25. When whole households were baptized, as that of Lydia, of the gaoler, and of Stephanas, Acts xvi. 15, 33. 1 Cor. i. 16, it is possible that there were also children baptized; and why need we seek for examples, when we have so many reasons?

4. Moreover, they are unwilling that children should be baptized, because they do not understand baptism. But we must not baptize children, because they understand it, as the aged and adult, but for

the reasons, which we have assigned before from the word of God; and it is enough, that they are by their incorporation into the church brought into a condition to understand it afterwards, as also their misery and deliverance, which they do not understand now neither. The children under the Old Testament did not understand circumcision, and it was nevertheless necessary, that they should be circumcised.

Before we dismiss this subject, we must propose and resolve two questions: the first is, whether all the elect children, born of persons, who are in covenant with God, partake virtually of the first principle and seed of regeneration, before their baptism? This question relates not to the elect children of heathens and others, who are not in covenant with God; for all agree that they are in their childhood alienated with their parents from the life of God; but the question relates to the elect children of persons, who are in covenant with God.

There are some eminently learned and godly men, who hold the affirmative of this, to wit, that all these children partake virtually before baptism of the principle and seed of regeneration, and that this seed of regeneration remains hidden and buried in many a long time under the clods of youthful and fleshly lusts, until it springs up, and shows itself alive by an actual conversion. The foundation, on which these worthy men build their opinion is, that regeneration is sealed in baptism, and must therefore exist before baptism. To this they add what Paul saith, that "the children of persons in covenant with God are holy," 1 Cor. vii. 14, and that "God had separated him from his mother's womb, and called him by his grace," Gal. i. 15. On which account the sponsors are required in the form of baptism to acknowledge, "that the children are sanctified in Christ, and therefore as members of his church ought to be baptized." And if these elect children have not this privilege above the elect children of persons, who are alienated from the covenant of God, that there is then no difference at all between the children of persons in covenant with God, and of heathens.

In order to express our thoughts upon this subject, we must say that certainly some children obtain regeneration from their birth in a mysterious manner. If we will not acknowledge this of Obadiah, Ahab's steward, 1 Kings xviii. 12, of Jeremiah the prophet, Jer. i. 5, and of others, who exhibited evidences of it in their youth, it is nevertheless undeniably evident in John the Baptist, "who was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb," Luke i. 15. This matter is also not impossible, any more than it is impossible, that a child newly born should have a virtual ability to

reason and to sin, and should assuredly have been born with and in the image of God, if our father Adam had continued to stand: but we cannot believe that all the elect children of persons in covenant are regenerated thus before baptism, because they would then all of them in their youth, and as they grew up in the use of reason, exhibit likewise certain evidences, each of them according to his capacity, that they possessed a good principle, as well as they exhibit evidences of their rationality and of sin. Was it not thus with Abijah, the child of Jeroboam, 1 Kings xiv. 13, and with Timothy, 2 Tim. iii. 15. Whoever will read the examples of children converted in their early life, enlarged and reprinted lately, will see the praises of God emphatically published by the mouths of such children. Who can persuade himself, that a person, who possesseth this first principle of regeneration in his soul from his youth, should not exhibit the least evidence of it, but that he should abandon himself to every vicious practice, until the end of his life, and that that seed should then first shoot forth by an actual conversion? The murderer * who was converted on the cross was a child of Jewish parents, who were in covenant with God, (for they who filled in those days the land of Judea with insurrections and murders were Jews, who would not submit to the power of the Gentiles,) who now can believe that this man, who had lived so long in the practice of horrible enormities, harboured any good principle in his mind? We must say here with the Saviour, "The tree is known by his fruit: a good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things: and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things," Matt. xii. 33, 35.

It is true, that baptism supposeth and sealeth regeneration, yet not always as already existing, but as future, and that the baptized elect children of persons in covenant with God, will surely partake of regeneration. This will not appear so strange to us, if we consider that the sacraments seal not only present, but also many future graces: all the benefits of the covenant of grace are sealed to the covenant people, and they nevertheless do not possess all these benefits, at the time, when they are sealed; it is true a perfect right to all those benefits is sealed unto them, but they do not therefore possess all those benefits at once; thus we must also say of those children, that they do not all partake of regeneration, when they are baptized, but that baptism sealeth to them, that they have a right to

* The person called a thief in the English translation, is called a murderer in the Dutch.

it, and that they shall obtain it. That we may understand this properly we must know, that God receives them without their knowledge into covenant with their parents, as his elect and redeemed by Christ; according to this covenant redemption by the blood of Christ, and by the Holy Ghost, who works faith, is promised to them, as the instructor saith: and thus the Lord acknowledges them for his children, as he calls them, Ezek. xvi. 0 21. In order now to seal this, they are baptized, see Acts ii. 38. 39, and obtain afterward regeneration and faith, whereby they actually enter into the covenant; and urge and plead the seal with the answer of a good conscience, that they may obtain of God all the grace of the covenant. See the text.

In this manner "are the children also holy," according to 1 Cor. vii. 14, not holy in fact, as if the first principles of holiness were imparted to all elect children of persons in covenant from their birth: Paul doth not in end this, any more than he doth that the unbelieving husband is sanctified indeed and in fact by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife by the believing husband; but the matter is thus, that the children of a marriage, into which persons enter in a holy manner, being born in the covenant, are also reckoned and esteemed holy therein by virtue of that covenant, which promiseth them the sanctification, purchased for them by the Mediator; for "he is made sanctification" to the children of the covenant also, 1 Cor. i 30. And so those "children are holy," as elect persons, who are yet "scattered abroad, and are not gathered into one body, are the children of God," as they are called, John xi. 52. From this we may also learn in what manner sponsors are required to acknowledge, that the children are sanctified in Christ. And in this manner "was Paul also separated from his mother's womb," Gal. i. 15. He adds indeed, "and called by his grace," but he was not called from his mother's womb, for he was not then yet capable of being called, but afterwards, when "God revealed his Son in him." If we apprehend the matter thus, we shall see that there is a great difference between the elect children of heathens, and of the believing covenant people; for these are favoured with much greater privileges than those, as they are admitted from their infancy into the covenant, and this is sealed to them, and the parents are greatly encouraged to hope for the salvation of such children, and those children, when they arrive to years of discretion, can solicit the Lord on the sealed covenant, like David, when he saith, Psalm xxii. 9, 10, "thou art he that took me out of the womb; thou didst make me hope," (or didst render me secure) when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was

cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly." Yea, the Lord blesses to them the means of grace, under which they are born and brought up, and "teaches them from their youth," Psalm lxxi. 17.

The other question, which we would resolve, is, how the parents, and the witnesses in baptism can be obliged to acknowledge, that the children are sanctified in Christ, seeing they cannot know this with respect to their children, and the elect children, who either do partake of the principle of regeneration, or will partake of it, are by much the fewest in number in the church: for "many are called, but few are chosen," according to Matt. xx. 16, xxii. 14. But it is not asked in the form, whether they acknowledge that all, or that this and that child is sanctified in Christ, but only children in general are spoken of, even the children of the church, who are the elect "children, whom the Lord our God will call," to the church, as Peter speaks, Acts ii. 39. For which calling the parents and witnesses ought to prepare the child, after it hath arrived to years of discretion, to which they are also obliged, when they present the child for baptism; yea, godly parents may look for this calling with hope, in behalf of their children, by virtue of the covenant of God, made with them and their seed, if it be not for this child in particular, nevertheless for their generation following; and therefore they can present a claim to the Lord, and solicit him for their children, upon that sealed covenant.

APPLICATION.

Are these my solutions of the questions proposed, hearers, not sufficiently clear, in order to satisfy your minds, ye will however not approve of the erroneous opinion of the Papists concerning the efficacy of water-baptism, and of the Mennonites concerning infant-baptism, but condemn it. How many are there nevertheless among us, who, whether they know this, or not, behave not otherwise than if they had never heard of this our truth, but had been educated among our adversaries! For,

1. Do not many conduct toward baptism, like the Papists? It appears plainly; for (a) they look upon baptism to be absolutely necessary for their children, and therefore they are as much, yea, more set on it than on regeneration, and the washing away of sins; it proceeds from this that they seek baptism for their children at incon-

venient seasons; doth the child die before it can be baptized, they are as much disturbed, as if it could not now be saved. And mark well, do ye make so much ado, and are ye so much concerned about the misery of your child to wit, that "it is a child of wrath by nature, even as others," as the apostle speaks? Eph. ii. 3. Have ye as great a desire that your child should be regenerated, that its sins should be washen away, that it should be justified and sanctified, as that it should be baptized? How few understand, and heartily seek the thing signified by baptism, when in the mean time they dote upon, and remember only the outward sign! It is still more evident that Popish principles possess the heart, (b) because they are easy and unconcerned, when their child is only baptized, they think it is now well, as if the child had now no more sin, and were in a state of grace; as if baptism had, by the mere act, as the Papists speak, washen away sins, while they do not show the least real concern with respect to the baptism of their child; for did ye, before your child was baptized, ever retire in secret to supplicate the Lord for your child? Did ye surrender your child in baptism, in covenant to the Lord? And did ye after baptism earnestly and frequently beseech him to be favourable to it, in consequence of the sealed covenant? Many have no knowledge of this, it is a strange thing to them, they never saw nor observed it in others; yea, they would consider such earnestness, and bowing of their knees, as savouring of Popery and as not beseeming Reformed Christians. But what advantage doth your child derive from such a careless, and mere bodily procuring of it to be baptized? Can such an outward baptism save your child? It is no more than "a putting away of the filth of the flesh," according to 1 Peter iii. 21.

2. Others see no more in baptism than the Socinians and Mennonites: for some look upon it only as a civil and ecclesiastical custom, a mere badge of Christianity, and a solemn way of giving a child its name: they would never have procured their children to be baptized, if they had not seen others do it, and if it did not look well. Is not this true? for if they saw aught more in baptism, would they not choose better witnesses, than they often do? they do not choose wise and godly persons, who are of a strict conversation, and are able, and heartily willing to discharge their duty toward the children for whom they solemnly obligate themselves; but they only consider whether they be relations, and whether they be able and liberal enough to bestow a handsome christening present. And how do they array the child, when they are about to present it for baptism? do they clothe it in a decent and modest manner? No, but as if they

were about to dedicate it to, and incorporate it into the world, they deck it in a fantastic manner, and appear with it attired so in the presence of God, and of the church, to the dishonour of the divine name and of baptism. Friends, if ye knew what baptism was, and wherein it consisted to separate your child from the world, to dedicate it in covenant to God, and procure it to be sealed, would ye appear in such a manner in the presence of God? Surely ye would not A solemn awe for God, for the church, and for the divine mysteries would restrain you from such vanity. Yea, do not men show that, with the Mennonites, they believe that baptism is not very necessary for children, when they so easily defer the baptism of their children without a reason, at least without weighty reasons. The witnesses, the fine clothes, are not at hand, or the place of baptism is not near, it can be done at some other opportunity; the child, they think, will not be damned, though it should not be baptized: but is it not an institution of God, to which he obligeth us? and if your child should die without baptism through your neglect, would it not grieve you, and cause you to think that in this respect ye had rejected the institution and counsel of God, that ye had not procured your child to be baptized. See Luke vii 30.

3. And how do the most of you conduct with respect to their own and their children's baptism? Observe only the behaviour of our baptized Christians. Ye who are baptized, do ye ever think of your baptism, what it signifies, and why it was administered to you? have ye indeed endeavoured to understand that this baptism teacheth you your sinful impurity, and your damnable condition? that the Triune God hath received you into covenant, and sealed all his grace to you, and that your sponsors dedicated you to God for this purpose? that ye solemnly engaged in baptism to forsake and deny all besides the Triune God, and to love and serve him alone and wholly? Have ye cleaved to this engagement, which was made for you, and actually yielded yourselves up for this purpose, "saying, and subscribing, I am the Lord's?" Isaiah xliv. 5. Alas, how few understand and regard this! Because they are baptized, they are easy and unconcerned: they live like unbaptized heathens: "they have forgotten that they were purged from their old sins: they had escaped the pollutions of the world" outwardly and sacramentally; "but they intangle themselves in them again: they suffer themselves to be overcome; and so their latter end is worse than the beginning," as Peter speaks, 2 Peter i. 9. ii. 20. What do ye, who conduct in this manner, but break the covenant of God, and testify openly that ye will not abide by the engagements which your parents and witnesses

made for you with the Lord? what think ye, will not the Lord revenge this breach of the covenant, and bring all those curses of the covenant upon the unfaithful breakers of it? certainly he will, read it yourselves. Lev. xxvi. 25—39. Jer. xi. 1—8. And to add this also, parents and others, who have presented children for baptism, did ye indeed understand what was proposed to you in baptism, and asked you? Have ye also kept your promises by instructing your children, and by causing them to be instructed? what should many do? they did not so much as know what they did, when they presented their child for baptism, and nodded to the questions that were proposed to them. If ye had done your duty, would your children be so ignorant, irreligious, stubborn, worldlyminded, and disorderly, as they are? surely something of Christianity and of morality would appear in them? but we do not now hear the language of Canaan from the mouths of your children, but the language of Ashdod, See Neh. xiii. 23, 24. The children manifest abroad in what manner, and by what kind of parents they are educated at home. What will become of the next generation? by what kind of persons will our church and state be yet governed? Parents and witnesses, how will the children, whose souls ye have neglected and abused in this manner, rise up against you to your sorrow in that great day, and accuse you on account of your conduct toward them! How will the Lord God accuse you on account of your conduct toward him! that ye have snatched his children, whom ye had born and dedicated to him from him, and offered them up to the world! ye may see it, Ezek. xvi. 20, 21. "If an ox, that was wont to push, had gored a son, or a daughter, it should be recompensed not only on the ox, but also on his owner, if he knew before that he was wont to push," Exod. xxi. 29, 30, 31. How much more then will the Lord recompense it upon the parents and witnesses, that they have not laboured, as much as they were able, to preserve the souls of their children from destruction? Did the Lord God inflict grievous judgments on Eli, who was otherwise a godly person, on his house and on all Israel on account of his carelessness toward his children, 1 Sam. iii. 11—14, and 1 Sam. iv. 10—22, what will not the Lord God then inflict upon those who are ungodly themselves, and who educate their children in an ungodly manner, and for hell!

Alas! that each one of you would impress this upon his mind, and strive to amend his conduct in this respect. Apply your hearts therefore hearers, to these admonitions of mine

1. Endeavour to understand the nature of baptism, read frequently the form of baptism, and see what it signifies, and to what it obligeth you, that ye may thus learn what use ye ought to make of your baptism. Can ye not understand it, lament that ye have lived so long in ignorance of this important matter, to so great a disadvantage of yourselves and of your children; and suffer others to teach you what ye do not know yourselves, and nevertheless ought to know: "the doctrine of baptisms is one of the principles of the doctrine of Christ," as Paul saith, Heb. vi. 1, 2. And if ye do not understand this, how will ye understand other and higher mysteries, which ye must necessarily understand.

2. Recover from your imagination, that water-baptism hath been by itself of any advantage to you. Your imagination, that baptism hath constituted you Christians, renders you continually careless, and injures your souls; therefore know that "the baptism, which is a putting away of the filth of the flesh, doth not save you," but that it is necessary that ye should be born again, in order that ye may be saved. Hear how the mouth of truth confirms this by a double verily, John iii. 3, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And therefore be earnestly desirous to be born again.

3. Give yourselves yet up to the Lord in the covenant, in which ye were surrendered forthwith after your birth by others: abide by that engagement which others made for you, and renew it in truth and with your hearts, "saying and subscribing, I am the Lord's," as it was foretold of the people, who should be sprinkled, Isaiah xliv. 5. Will ye refuse, and obstinately persist in your shameful carelessness and sinfulness, glory not then any longer in the name of Christian, but lay it aside, come to the pulpit, and declare in the presence of God and of the church, before whom ye were solemnly baptized, and engaged to God, that ye will not abide by that covenant and engagement, which your parents and witnesses made for you, and upon which they procured you to be baptized, but that ye revoke it. And it will then appear, "whether ye belong to us, or to our enemies." But would ye abhor this, abide then by the covenant made and sealed, receive all grace from it, and conduct yourselves worthily of it. In this manner do we, like the Jews, cleave to the words, which others speak for us to the Lord, in making a covenant, and "we enter into the curse and into the oath," Neh. x. 29. Thus would the seal of baptism, which hath been so often profaned by you, be yet "a seal and undoubted testimony to you, that

ye have an eternal covenant of grace with God," as the form of baptism speaks.

4. Give heed and observe, when baptism is administered. We must not then hurry out of the church, nor suffer our eyes to wander. Something divine is transacted, a child is surrendered in covenant to God, and sealed in his name. We must therefore listen attentively to what is proposed and asked by the servant of the Lord in his name: we must also unite in hearty prayer with the congregation: think then that ye were baptized in the same manner, and for what end the Lord obliged himself to you, and ye to him. Ye would then renew your baptism frequently, and obtain new grace, and vigor, so that your "hearts would, like Jehoshaphat's, be lifted up in the ways of the Lord," 2 Chron. xvii. 6.

5. Be much and heartily exercised about the baptism of your children. Let it not be a matter of indifference to you whom ye select to be witnesses for your children; but seek virtuous and devout persons, who know what they do, and will earnestly study the spiritual welfare of your children. Do not present your child until ye have besought the Lord for it, and then dedicate it to the Lord, and give it up to him, as Hannah gave her son Samuel, 1 Sam. i. 27, 28. Enter sincerely and with a perfect heart into your engagement to the Lord for your child; but fulfil also your promises, by separating your child from the world, and by keeping it separated, "bringing it up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Thus Paul admonisheth you, Eph. vi. 4, and Solomon, Prov. xxii. 6, and thus the saints also acted, as Abraham, Gen. xviii. 19, David, Prov. iv. 3, 4, the mother and grandmother of Timothy, 2 Tim. i. 5, iii. 15. Fathers, are not your children your own flesh and blood? Mothers, have ye not borne them in your bowels? do ye not love them heartily? do ye not design all that ye have for them? is not the least evil that befalls them, intolerable to you? would ye then bring them up for hell, and not for heaven? Ye may not neglect this duty; neither may ye, who have appeared as witnesses for this or that child; for ye have all solemnly obligated yourselves thereto.

6. Children, who are so far advanced that ye can in some measure understand the divine mysteries, and know what is good or evil for you, begin in your early life, to know and to seek the Lord: "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, of which ye shall say, I have no pleasure in them," as Solomon saith to you, Eccl. xii. 1. So Abijah, the son of Jeroboam acted, Obadiah, Ahab's steward, David, Jeremiah, John the baptist, Timothy, and others. Nothing can be more pleasant to

children, than "to bear the yoke of the Lord in their youth" Lam. iii. 27. Ye will surely not hasten to destruction? Ye are obliged by your baptism to serve the Lord; therefore obey your parents; beware of youthful lusts, separate yourselves from thoughtless children; attend upon preaching and catechising, and assure yourselves that ye never will repent of it.

Thus ye might with David, solicit the Lord to show you favour in your afflictions, and in your old age. Read Psalm xxii. 10, 11. lxxi. 17, 18. We should thus, agreeably to the words of Paul, Eph. iv. 13, "Come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" that we might, as he saith farther, 1 Cor. xiii. 11, 12, "put away childish things, and no longer see through a glass darkly, but face to face; and no longer know in part, but even as we are known. Amen.

THE

NATURE OF THE

LORD'S SUPPER EXPLAINED.

XXVIII. LORD'S DAY.

1 Cor. xi. 23—26. For I have received of the Lord, that which I also delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner he also took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.

Q. 75. *How art thou admonished and assured in the Lord's Supper, that thou art a partaker of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross, and of all his benefits?*

A. Thus, that Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat of this broken bread, and to drink of this cup in remembrance of him; adding these promises: first, that his body was offered and broken on the cross for me, and his blood shed for me, as certainly as I see with my eyes, the bread of the Lord broken for me, and the

cup communicated to me: and further, that he feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life, with his crucified body and shed blood, as assuredly as I receive from the hands of the minister, and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, as certain signs of the body and blood of Christ.

Q. 76. What is it then to eat the crucified body, and drink the shed blood of Christ?

A. It is not only to embrace with a believing heart all the sufferings and death of Christ, and thereby to obtain the pardon of sin, and life eternal; but also, besides that, to become more and more united to his sacred body by the Holy Ghost, who dwells both in Christ and in us; so that we, though Christ is in heaven, and we on earth, are notwithstanding, "Flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone;" and that we live and are governed for ever by one Spirit, as members of the same body are by one soul.

Q. 77. Where has Christ promised, that he will as certainly feed and nourish believers with his body and blood, as they eat of this broken bread, and drink of this cup?

A. In the institution of the supper, which is thus expressed: "The Lord Jesus in the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me: after the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye as often as ye drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

This promise is repeated by the holy apostle Paul, where he says, "the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many, are one bread and one body; because we are all partakers of that one bread."

AS it is necessary that a man should be born, in order that he may exist, so it is also necessary that he should be daily nourished, that he may continue in existence. No man exists necessarily nor from eternity, nor of himself by his essence; he must have his beginning from another, which he obtains by his birth. Thus also he cannot continue in existence of himself, nor cause himself to exist in future; a higher efficient than himself must cause him to exist in fu-

ture; if he shall continue to exist. It is God indeed who "preserves man and beast," as David saith, Psalm xxxvi. 6. The Lord could indeed do this immediately, but it pleaseth him of his goodness to do it by means, and by daily food: man hath thus time after time a new refreshment, and a repeated experience of the kindness of God.

This is necessary for the body; but as the soul, alienated from the life of God, cannot live, unless she be born again, so she cannot remain alive unless she continually receive spiritual food: therefore the Lord, willing to finish the good work which is begun in her, affords her also daily food: he promiseth her that he "will guide her continually and satisfy her," Isaiah lviii. 11. To this end he gives her not only the good things of his covenant, "satisfies her with the goodness of his house, even of his holy temple," as David trusted that he would do, Psalm lxv. 4, causes her "to eat that which is good, to delight herself in fatness," as he offers her, Isa. lv. 2, that he may "strengthen the heart with grace," according to Heb. xiii. 9, but he gives her also his word, and the sacrament of the supper, by which that delicious food is served up to her, and received by her in its proper savour and relish; for "the cup is the communion of the blood of Christ, and the bread is the communion of his body," as Paul speaks, 1 Cor. x. 16. By which he therefore enjoins on us to eat his body, and drink his blood, as that faithful man delivers in the text, agreeably to the institution of Christ. We have seen on a former occasion how the Lord seals regeneration to his people, we must now show how he nourishes them by the seal of the supper.

This is an important doctrine, and it is therefore considered with exactnes by the instructor, in four particulars:

I. He explains the proper nature of the supper in this Lord's day.

II. He refutes the errour of transubstantiation and of the mass, Q. 78, 79, 80.

III. He shows who are, and who are not partakers of the supper, Q. 81.

IV. And he then defends the supper by the keys of the kingdom of heaven, Q. 82, 83, 84.

In order to explain the nature of the Lord's supper, we will unfold, I. the name and parts, II. the ends, and III. the circumstances of it.

1. This sacrament is called "the breaking of bread," Acts ii. 42. xx. 7. "the table of the Lord," 1 Cor. x. 21. "the communion of

the body and blood of Christ," 1 Cor. x. 16, but properly, "the Lord's supper," 1 Cor. xi. 20. because the Lord celebrated and instituted it in the evening or night, when he was betrayed; not because he would oblige us to administer the supper at that time, but, because he ate the passover at that time according to the divine institution, and celebrated this sacrament with the remains of it. And it is called particularly "the Lord's supper, because the Lord himself instituted it, is that which is signified by it, and is the end of it: see this in the text.

The nature of this sacrament cannot be rightly explained, without considering the constituent parts of it; these are, (1) the outward signs, (2) the thing signified, (3) the union of the sign with the thing signified, and (4) the foundation, or ground of that union.

1. The outward signs are the use of bread and wine, which are sufficient to constitute a perfect meal for feeding, refreshing and strengthening a person. Whether the bread must be leavened, or unleavened, risen or unrisen, cannot be determined from the example of Christ, because he made use of unleavened and unrisen bread only, which was ready at hand, on account of the passover. It appears to us most proper to use leavened and risen bread, because that is most nourishing and savoury, and therefore better adapted to serve for a sacramental sign, and to represent in a lively manner the thing signified. The other sign in the supper is wine: whether this must be white, or red, mixed with water, or unmixed, can also not be determined from the example of Christ; for he speaks only of "the fruit of the vine," Matt. xxvi. 29, which it is said was red and mixed with water in the passover, according to the custom of those times. We make use of pure wine rather than of any other because Christ speaks only of the fruit of the vine, and this is more proper to represent and seal the spiritual object. But it is an insufferable conduct of the Papists, that they administer only wafers, and thus merely the lightest kind of bread, which can scarcely be called bread; and when they also withhold the cup in the supper from the people, to wit, the laity, they act contrary to the nature of a supper, and of Christ's institution, yea, they commit sacrilege. Christ gave the cup as well as the bread, to his disciples, and the apostles gave it to the churches: the Papists cannot excuse this conduct of theirs by saying that Christ gave the cup to the apostles only; for he also gave to them only, and to no others, the bread; yet they will not on this account withhold the bread from the people. Moreover the apostles did not receive the cup, as apostles, but as common communicants. Furthermore, the Papists cannot conceal this shame of

theirs by pretending, that Christ's blood is in his body, and is thus received with the bread; for then the priest also would not need to receive the cup, and the blood of Christ is represented in the supper, as shed. Neither doth it help them that the supper is called "the breaking of bread;" for this doth not exclude the drink, and a common meal is so called. See Luke xxv. 1. xxiv. 30.

But these signs cannot be of any advantage, unless they be used. therefore Jesus, when he administered this supper, "took" and laid hold of them; he "gave thanks" for them, and "blessed" them, by which means he sanctified and set them apart to be sacramental signs; "he broke" the bread, and "gave it with the cup," which contained the wine, "to the disciples," and he commanded them to "take, eat and drink in remembrance of him," to which he added, in order to explain the virtue of the sacrament, that "the bread was his body, which was broken for them, and the cup his blood, the blood of the New Testament, or the New Testament in his blood, which was shed for them, and for many." The Papists and Lutherans act contrary to this, not only when they administer the bread whole and unbroken which therefore cannot signify the broken body of Christ; but also when they do not give, or suffer the communicants to take it into their hands, but thrust it into their mouths as if their hands were less clean than their mouths, or any other outward or inward part of their body, and as if the hands of the masspriest were purer than the hands of the common believers. It is usual to inquire here, whether Christ himself also partook of the Lord's supper, and whether he administered it also to the traitor Judas; these are not matters of such great importance, that we need dispute with any person about them; but it is more than probable, that Christ himself partook of the supper, since he received all the other sacraments, and he saith himself, "that he would not henceforth drink of the fruit of the vine," Matt. xxvi. 29. He had therefore drunk of it. It is also likely, that Judas did not receive this supper; for the devil entered into him with the paschal sop, which had been dipped in the dish. Jesus instantly dismissed him, and he went forthwith out, John xiii. 26, 27, 30. This happened before the supper.

2. These signs, used in this manner, signify something; which is the body and blood of Christ, that is, his painful suffering, exhibited most visibly in the breaking of his body, and the shedding of his blood, called by Christ himself "the blood of the New Testament, or the testament in his blood, shed for the remission of sins." In order to understand this rightly, we must know that the Lord God enters into a covenant of grace with all the elect, in order to be a

God to them, and to forgive their sins. This covenant, which is the same in all times, hath a twofold administration, namely, the administration of the Old, and the administration of the New Testament. The Old Testament consisteth in the promise of the forgiveness of sins through the reflex virtue of the sufferings of the Messiah, who was to come, which testament was dedicated, signified, and sealed by the blood of the beasts that were sacrificed, as Paul teacheth us, Heb. ix 18—22. The New Testament consists in the promise of the forgiveness of sins by the atonement, actually accomplished through the shedding of the blood of the Lord Jesus, for the establishment of the testament of God; this the same apostle teacheth us, when he saith, Heb. ix. 15, "For this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions, that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." The supper doth not then signify the forgiveness of sins by the suffering of the Messiah, who is yet to come, as the passover did: but the forgiveness of sins by the atonement actually accomplished through the shed blood of Jesus. The Lord's supper excels the passover, as much as the New Testament excels the Old.

But the use of the elements signifies spiritual things, as well as the elements themselves. We might say that the taking, and blessing of the bread and cup signify that the Father accepted, ordained, sanctified and qualified his Son to be Surety and High Priest: that the breaking of the bread, and the pouring out of the wine intimate his dying and bloody sufferings, which broke his body, and destroyed his life; and also that Christ, when he gave the bread and cup, expressed that he most readily would, and now did surrender up his body, blood and life for the sinner to death, and that he actually imparted himself, with all the fruits of his sufferings, to the penitent and believing sinner. But that we may abide by the instructor, who designs chiefly the thing signified by the eating of the bread, and the drinking of the cup, we say that this eating and drinking of the signs signifies the eating and drinking of the flesh and blood of Christ; therefore he saith, "eat and drink, for this is my body, this is my blood;" and also John vi. 53, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

It might be asked here, why doth Christ command us to eat his flesh, as a sacrifice of atonement, and drink his blood, offered up for the remission of sins, since under the Old Testament it was forbidden to eat of the sacrifice of atonement, according to Lev. iv. 2—12. It was lawful for the priest to eat only of the people's sacrifice of

atonement, as we see, Lev. vi. 30, but he might not eat of his own sacrifice of atonement, for it was to be wholly consumed by fire, as the Lord commanded, Lev. iv. 3—12. To this we must add, that "no man might eat of the blood, because the Lord gave that upon the altar to make an atonement for souls," Lev. xvi. 10, 11, 12. And the Lord Jesus assigns the selfsame reason for eating his flesh and drinking his blood, for which they might not eat blood: for he saith, this is my blood, which is shed for the remission of sins. This matter will appear still more strange, if we consider that the prohibition of eating of the flesh, and drinking of the blood of atonement is founded in reason; for, (a) they who ate of the sacrifice of atonement were considered as taking upon themselves, and as bearing the sins, for which they would make an atonement, which the priests did by their eating, as we see, Lev. x. 17. (b) They who ate of the sacrifice, which was lawful for every one who brought a thankoffering, were admitted to fellowship and to the most intimate friendship with God, as persons who ate of one table and altar with him, as Paul teacheth, 1 Cor. x. 18, 20. Now he who should eat of his sacrifice of atonement, and thus bear his sins, could not be considered as exercising fellowship with God, as a friend, but was obliged to stand afar off, as a person, who was laden with his sins, and as an enemy, and to abase himself before the Lord with humble fasting: and it was therefore a contradiction, that any one should eat of his sacrifice of atonement. Why then doth Christ command us, contrary to the divine institution, to eat his flesh, as a sacrifice of atonement, and to drink his blood, which was shed for the remission of sins?

This is the difficulty. They might not eat any flesh and blood of the sacrifice of atonement under the Old Testament, because it did not take away sins in such a manner, that the sinner was wholly delivered from sin, and might be admitted to a true fellowship and friendship with God; for the sins were transferred to the sacrifice, and he who ate the sacrifice, united himself to the flesh of the sacrifice, and to the sins of the flesh of that sacrifice, and so the sins remained upon and in the sacrificer. "The blood of the sinoffering was brought into the tabernacle of the congregation, to make an atonement in the holy place, and therefore that flesh might not be eaten, but was to be burned with fire," according to the law of Lev. vi. 30, as an evidence, that the sins were retained and laid up there; as it were, until the time of reformation: but when Christ requireth that we should eat his flesh, and drink his blood of atonement, he shows that his priesthood and sacrifice of atonement were of another

nature, and that he atoned so perfectly, and removed so entirely in one day all the accumulated transgressions of those, who were under the first testament, that none of them remained, and that believers, eating this flesh, and drinking this blood of his, do not retain their sins any longer upon them, but are admitted to the truest and liveliest fellowship with God by this eating and drinking. And thus Christ administering a priesthood and sacrifice different from the Levitical priests, could, and was obliged to institute a different and New Testament, and to deliver different commandments in it from those, which were in the former testament, ordering us to eat his flesh and drink his blood of atonement, which was forbidden before. Therefore the apostle saith, Heb. vii. 11, 12. "If there were then perfection by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there, that another priest should arise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change of the law."

But must we then eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ properly, and in a corporal manner, as they did anciently eat of the thankofferings, and the priests of the sacrifices of atonement? By no means. The Capernaites thought that Christ meant this when he spoke of eating his flesh and drinking his blood; but he understood this spiritually, and therefore said, John vi. 63. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." As this spiritual eating of Christ's flesh and drinking of his blood is understood by few, the instructor asks in the seventy sixth question, what this signifies? It is, (a) to "embrace with a believing heart all the sufferings and death of Christ, and to obtain thereby the pardon of sin and eternal life." He is proffered and presented with his sacrifice to the sinner for the complete salvation of his soul; the sinner, perceiving this, appropriates and accepts him and his sacrifice by faith, as a hungry and thirsty person accepts and takes to himself the proffered meat and drink; therefore he cries, Isaiah lv. 1 "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money, and without price." Having spoken of himself, as the bread from heaven, and of faith in himself, he explains this faith by the similitude of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, John vi. 32—63. (b) "Besides this, to become more and more united to his sacred body by the Holy Ghost who dwells both in Christ and in us." &c. And so this eating and drinking denotes to unite Christ in his sufferings and

benefits to ourselves in the most intimate manner, as meat and drink; thus the Saviour himself explains it, John vi. 56. "He who eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." Wonderful! Christ is in heaven, and believers are on earth, and yet "faith causeth him to dwell in their hearts," Eph. iii. 17, so that they are not only together "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," Eph. v. 30, but as members of one body, they also live and are governed by one soul and one Spirit for ever; whereby "that which is true in him, is also true in them," 1 John ii. 8. Yea, "being thus joined to him, they are one spirit with him," as Paul speaketh, 1 Cor. vi. 17. (c) To this we must also add, that to eat the flesh, and drink the blood of Christ, is to make use of him, and his salutary sufferings, as meat and drink, to strengthen ourselves, when we should faint, so that we "become strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," Eph. vi. 10 Hear what Paul saith concerning this, Heb. xiii. 9, 10. "It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace, not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein; we have an altar whereof they have no right to eat, which serve the tabernacle." (d) It denotes finally to enjoy a full pleasure, and to delight ourselves in Christ, and in the virtue of his sufferings, as the dainty food of the soul: he doth indeed sup with the soul, and the soul with him, according to his promise, Rev. iii. 20. He invites the soul "to eat that which is good, and to delight herself in fatness," Isaiah lv. 2. He urges her to eat and drink to her full satisfaction, crying, Song v. 1. Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." That he may satisfy her himself with the goodness of his house, even of his holy temple, he puts the dainty morsel, the power of his goodness, into her mouth, saying, Psalm lxxxi. 10 "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."

3. We may do this at all times, and upon every occasion, when our faith is only in lively exercise; but Christ chooseth that we should do it particularly in this sacrament, as it is also exceedingly fit to lead us up thereto by the union of the sign with the thing signified: this consists, (1) in the agreement and resemblance of the signs to the things signified by them, whereby they clearly illustrate to us the nature of the things signified by them; for as Christ took, and blessed the bread and cup, so the Father accepted, blessed and sanctified him to be a surety; as Christ broke the bread, and the wine was poured out into the cup, so the body and life of Christ was broken by the shedding of his blood; as he gave the broken bread to be eaten, and the wine to be drunk, so he gives his flesh to be eaten, and his blood to be drunk; as when we eat the bread and

drink the wine, we make them our own, unite them to ourselves, strengthen and refresh ourselves with them, so we make the sufferings of Christ our own, unite ourselves to them, strengthen and refresh ourselves with them. This is not sufficient, but to this union belongs also, (2) the conjunction of the sign with the thing signified by the bodily use of the signs, and the spiritual use of the things signified through faith. While we eat the bread and drink the wine with our mouths, our souls do by and in this eating and drinking, raise themselves up through faith, to Christ, and eat his flesh and drink his blood: therefore the deacon in ancient times cried to them, who partook of the Lord's supper, "Lift up your hearts on high;" and we still cry to them, "That we may now be fed with the true heavenly bread Christ Jesus, let us not cleave with our hearts unto the external bread and wine, but lift them up on high in heaven, where Christ Jesus is." We must eat not only in a corporal manner, and it is not enough to eat and drink only spiritually, but we must do both at the same time, that we may eat and drink sacramentally, and that "the cup may be the communion of the blood of Christ to us, and the bread the communion of the body of Christ," as Paul requireth, 1 Cor. x. 16.

It is true, we can also by our daily meals attain to heavenly enjoyments, and be led up by them to the spiritual eating of Christ's flesh, and drinking of his blood: but our ordinary meals were not instituted for this purpose, and they have not the promise, that our souls shall be fed by them, as the sacramental feast hath, being founded upon the word of the Lord, by which it was (1) instituted. Christ not only celebrated the supper with his apostles, but he also ordered them and their successors to administer it, after his example, to baptized believers, until he came: therefore he said of the administration of the bread, and of the administration of the cup. "Do this in remembrance of me," 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25, and thus Paul also delivered this institution to the church, having received it of the Lord, as he saith in the text; in which he also prescribes to the stewards of the mysteries of God a method of administering the supper, after the example of Christ, to wit, taking the bread, breaking it, and giving it with the cup to the communicants to eat and to drink, accompanying these actions with thanksgivings and blessings, in order to illustrate in this manner the virtue of the sacrament, and apply the promises of the New Testament to the mind, to which the words of Paul and of Christ tend, 1 Cor. x. 16. xi. 24, 25. But it is enjoined not only upon the rulers of the church, but also upon every believer to do this, namely, to eat and drink in remembrance of Christ; there-

fore the instructor saith, "that Christ hath commanded me and every believer to eat of this broken bread, and to drink of this cup in remembrance of him," in the seventy fifth question. Paul delivered the institution, which he had received, not only to the rulers of the church, but also to the common members, who were obliged to show the death of the Lord until he came, and to examine themselves, before they partook of the supper, as the apostle showeth, 1 Cor. xi. 26, 28. This word of the institution obliges believers not only to make use of the supper, but also to make use of the elements, as signs, and in remembrance of him, and by them to rise up to higher things, and to eat of the flesh and to drink of the blood of Christ truly; but since the word of the institution is not sufficient for this purpose, therefore the Lord hath added to it, (2) the word of the promise, by which these signs are constituted seals in order to assure believers, "first, that his body was offered and broken on the cross, and his blood shed for their sins, as certainly as the bread is broken for them, and the cup communicated to them; and further, he also promises that he will feed and nourish their souls to everlasting life, as assuredly as they receive from the hand of the minister, and taste with their mouths, the bread and cup of the Lord, as certain signs of the body and blood of Christ," as the instructor speaks in the seventy fifth question. That Christ promiseth this by these signs, the seventy seventh question shows from the text, and from 1 Cor. x. 16. The apostle relates in the text, that Christ saith, that "the broken bread was his body, which was broken for his people: and that the cup is the New Testament in his blood." How must we understand this? is the bread and wine changed into his body and blood? by no means, as we will show on the following Lord's day; but according to the nature of the sacraments the bread and the wine are the memorials, the pledges and seals, that his body was broken, and his blood shed for believers. And therefore the name and virtue of the thing signified is added to the signs; for these signs are to them instead of Christ's broken body and shed blood. To this it is further added from 1 Cor. x. 16, that "the bread and the cup are the communion of the body and blood of Christ." This must necessarily denote, that the bread and wine signify and seal the communion of the body and blood of Christ.

II. It will not be necessary now to show you, hearers, that the end, for which the Lord Christ gave his supper to his church was, that it might serve for a memorial of him, and might seal his love and kindness, since this hath been shown sufficiently in treating upon the word of the institution and of promise: but that we may not

dismiss our subject thus, we say that there are besides this two other special ends of this supper. The first is, that it may serve for a solemn evidence of the mutual exercise of communion and friendship between the Lord and the church. We know that sincere friends are wont to hold feasts, in order to exercise mutual fellowship and friendship. Christ, that he may allure sinners to open their hearts to him, promiseth his communion under the figure of a feast, of which he would partake with them, and they with him, Rev. iii. 10. And thus also the bread and wine of the supper are "the communion of the body and blood of Christ," as we have heard repeatedly from Paul. Those under the Old Testament, who ate of the thankofferings, were considered, as eating of one table with God, because they partook of the portions of the sacrifices from the altar, which was God's table. Much more then do God and his church exercise communion with each other in the supper, since this is the sign and seal of Christ's sacrifice of atonement, by which all the sins that separate the sinner from God, are taken away. We see that Paul himself teacheth us this, 1 Cor. x. 16—21. Not only do God and every believer in particular exercise communion with each other, but also believers in general with one another, who, as tablefellows, partake of one meat and drink, and do thus publicly testify their mutual love and friendship in the Lord. Paul teacheth us this also: for after he had said, 1 Cor. x. 16, that "the bread and the cup are the communion of the body and blood of Christ," he adds, vrs. 17. "For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." He hath respect to this, when he saith also, 1 Cor. xii. 13. "We have all been made to drink into one Spirit." In order to strengthen the exercise of this communion still more, they were wont anciently to make also a lovefeast after the supper, and to give each other a kiss of love. See Jude vrs. 12. 1 Peter v. 14. The other end for which the Lord instituted the supper was, that we should "show forth his death," which we do. "as often as we eat this bread, and drink this cup," as the text speaks. For we do then show in a publick manner that we seek our whole salvation in his death; then his death, and the virtue of his death are shown forth repeatedly by thanksgivings during the administration; and after the administration we sing, in imitation of him, a hymn of praise, as an acknowledgment of his kindness and love; yea, we solemnly oblige ourselves by receiving the signs to show forth his death, and we fulfil our obligation, when we conduct ourselves in all things worthily of his death.

III. We may not dismiss this subject yet, but must agreeably to

our method, speak also of certain circumstances, and particularly of the communicants. I inquire not at present who have, and who have not a right to the supper, for this we must do, when we treat on the eighty first question: but we attend to the posture of body, in receiving the supper. We do not look upon it to be best to receive it standing, as Israel received the passover, when they departed out of Egypt; it appears exceedingly unsuitable to receive it kneeling, because this savours of idolatry, as it resembles a worshipping of the signs, as the Papists do; but it is exceedingly proper to sit, not only because Christ and his apostles sat, but also because this sacrament is, as it were, a common feast, of which we usually partake sitting. (2) The place must be where the church meets, which used to come together for this purpose, as the apostles commonly administered the supper in those places. See Acts ii. 46. xx. 7. 1 Cor. xi. 20. It is indeed a sacrament for the church: and therefore the private masses of the masspriests, who sometimes partake of the supper alone, are to be condemned. (3) The time when, and how often cannot be determined: we only find that it is to be repeated; therefore the apostle saith in the text, "As often as ye eat this bread," &c. Baptism, which incorporates us into the church, is administered only once, but the supper, which nourisheth us, often We read that "the disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread," Acts xx. 7, but this was done also daily, Acts ii. 46. It is nevertheless not to be thought, that the whole church came together every day for this purpose, but the apostles administered it probably so often, on account of the daily accession of new covenant people, or they administered it, on account of the perils of the times, now to one part of the church, and then to another; for they "broke bread from house to house," Acts ii. 46.

APPLICATION.

Behold, hearers, what manner of kindness the Lord shows to his church, when he bestows this supper on her. Is it not a great favour, that he surrenders himself for vile sinners, to take away their sins once for all, that they may be forgiven? that he suffers his body to be broken, his blood to be shed? that he endures such grievous sufferings and pains, inflicted on him by wicked men, by angels, yea, even by his Father? what an ardent love must have been in-

kindled in his soul, when he died for you, O believers, while ye were yet sinners and ungodly! Are ye able to comprehend, is it in your power to conceive the breadth, and the length, the depth and the height of the love of Christ, that he gives you his flesh to eat, and his blood to drink? It was a privilege of Israel that they might eat of their thankofferings with joy, Deut. xxvii. 7, but they might not eat of their sacrifices of atonement, although they were only irrational animals; what a precious privilege is it then, that ye may eat of the flesh of the Son of God, which was broken, and his blood, which was shed for atonement as an evidence that your sins are so perfectly taken away, that they cannot hinder you from exercising the most lively fellowship with God! yea, consider wherein it consists to eat the flesh, and to drink the blood of Christ: remember what hath been said before, and it will excite an eager appetite in you for it, and ye will have a foretaste of it. Dare ye not think, O weak believers, that it is for you? Hear then from Psalm xxii. 26, 29, that the death of Jesus is also your bread: "The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him, your heart shall live for ever." Not only "shall all that be fat on the earth eat and worship; but all they likewise that go down to the dust, shall bow before him: and he who cannot keep alive his own soul." Jesus gives you the seal and pledge of this, to strengthen, assure, and seal you; the signs are the bread and the cup of the Lord, which he himself calls his body and blood.

What think ye now, ye who cannot be admitted to the Lord's supper? is it not lamentable, that ye have not yet prepared yourselves for this, by a true faith, and by a confession of your faith? do ye not see this, when ye observe what hath been said above? and O that ye might see it! what hath hindered you hitherto from obeying the truth? why have ye not partaken? will ye know it from me? It is either your blindness and ignorance of the excellence of the supper, and of eating Christ's flesh, and drinking his blood; otherwise ye would be eager and restless for it, until ye had partaken of it in truth. Or it is your carelessness, ye neglect the salvation and happiness of your souls; yea, do not so much as think of it. Or it is earthlymindedness, your concern about your lands, your cattle, your wife, your merchandizing employs your heart and time, so that ye have neither inclination nor opportunity to attend diligently to the Lord's supper, and therefore ye excuse yourselves, like those who were bidden, of whom the Saviour speaks, Luke xiv. 17—20. Because men's consciences sometimes gnaw them, they will, in order to divert this, persuade themselves that the sup-

per is not necessary, they think that they can be saved, though they do not partake of it: but admit that the supper is not absolutely necessary, and that some are saved without ever having received it, those nevertheless who despise and neglect it from ignorance, carelessness, and worldlymindedness, shall not taste of God's blessed supper neither, as Jesus threateneth, Luke xiv. 24. How! do ye not manifest by this conduct of yours, that there is truly no life in your souls, and that ye are not yet hungry nor thirsty for the food of the soul; and therefore ye shall be "sent empty away" from the Lord, as the blessed virgin spake, Luke i. 53. Friends, do ye indeed know what ye do? Ye have by your baptism been surrendered in covenant with God; if ye will not then also by a sincere turning to the Lord approach the supper, say then to God, that ye renounce your covenant engagement, and declare that ye will not abide by the promise, which your parents and witnesses made for you to the Lord; yea, ye reject all the grace of God, and declare that ye never will regard it. Do ye ask, if it will then be well with you, when ye confess your faith, and become members? no, it will not be well with you, until ye be truly converted, accept of the Son of God, actually enter into an everlasting covenant, and oblige yourselves to serve the Lord, for otherwise the bread and the wine of the supper can be of no more advantage to you, than the real flesh and blood of Christ was to the Capernaites, according to John vi. 63.

Therefore we may not approve of all those members of our Church, who, by making a confession of their faith have procured their names to be enroiled in the register of the church, for they have not just on that account been written by the Lord with the righteous. Judas was numbered with the apostles, and Demas with the companions of Paul, and how many are virgins by profession, who have never tasted of the flesh and blood of Christ? that manna is hidden from them. Hear this, ye many members and communicants of our church, is it not true? it certainly is: for (a) many of you are exceedingly ignorant and unskilful in divine truths, and especially in the nature of the Lord's supper, "they do not discern the body of the Lord," and hence it is that they "eat and drink unworthily, and a judgment to themselves," as Paul speaks, 1 Cor. xi. 29. When they made their confession, they repeated indeed the lesson which they had learned with difficulty; but how little of it did they understand! yea, what they knew of it then, they have entirely forgotten since, they know no more of it at all; but what think ye, O ignorant members, is the soul without knowledge good? the wisest of kings saith nay, Prov. xix. 2. Did it suffice when ye were first ad-

mitted, that ye knew so little? it can surely not suffice to approach the supper, that ye know less now, we forbid scandalous members to partake of the supper; but might we not with propriety forbid you also, on account of your gross ignorance? I cannot see how it could be considered as illdone, if we should oblige you to learn and confess the divine truths anew. (b) Others, it is true, have a partial notion, yea, some are far advanced in the knowledge of the truth; they know exceedingly well how to discern the body of the Lord, and can discourse admirably well on the nature of the supper; but this is indeed all. Ye then, who have knowledge, what is your knowledge? hath it been taught you by the Spirit of the Lord, so that ye know God and Christ also? have ye learned the truth, as it is in Jesus, so that it renders your souls hungry, and thirsty after Christ, warms and sanctifies your souls? this would be precious, acceptable to the Lord, and an evidence to you of your right to the Lord, and to this seal of his covenant: but is your knowledge only a "literal and natural knowledge, and doth it puff you up? ye do then know nothing, as ye ought to know," as Paul speaks. 1 Cor. viii. 1, 2. And therefore ye do not yet eat Christ's flesh, nor drink his blood in the supper. O how well would it be for you, if ye knew your spiritual ignorance, and "became fools, that ye might be wise," as the same apostle speaks, 1 Cor. iii. 18. (c) If we inquire further how many are there among us who draw near to the Lord's table without any motive, or from a wrong one? for many approach from custom; some to conceal their ungodliness from the world, imagining that men must, and will then entertain a good opinion of them; others to obtain the forgiveness of their sins, and to pacify in some measure a restless conscience; and there are those also, who think that the injunction to receive the supper is like one of the ten commandments, which all men are obliged to obey, because Christ saith, "Do this in remembrance of me," which is certainly said to believers only, as we will show in its proper place: yet if we were to ask many why, and for what end they partook of the supper, would they not be speechless, like "the guest without a wedding garment?" Matt. xxii. 12. But friends, of what advantage can the supper be to you, when ye do not aim at, nor pursue the true end of it? How do ye aggravate your condemnation! But this we will show, when we treat on the thirtieth Lord's day. Alas, that ye would once open your eyes, be concerned, and earnestly desirous to enter into the covenant, and to be admitted into the testament of God, in order to obtain a right, and to be qualified to partake of the supper; for ye are called and invited to the covenant of God, when it is said to you,

Luke xiv. 17. "Come, for all things are ready." Do not then draw back, for "if any man draw back," saith Paul, in the name of the Lord, Heb. x. 38, "my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

But with respect to you who cannot keep your souls alive, and who have therefore fled for refuge to the Son of God, and have entered into his covenant, and procured an admission into his testament, in order to be found in him.

1. Let your souls earnestly desire the atoning flesh and blood of the Lord, in order to eat and drink of them until ye are satisfied. For the hungry and thirsty are invited: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price," saith the Lord, Isaiah lv. 1. These have the promises, that they shall be filled: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled," said Jesus, Matt. v. 6. Mary, the mother of Jesus, said from her experience, Luke i. 53. "He hath filled the hungry with good things." Are not the signs served up to you, that they may excite an eager appetite in you for this tasteful meat and drink, the flesh and blood of Jesus? of what service can the sacrament be to you, if ye do not long for it? is it not then a tasteless meat and drink? hunger is indeed the best sauce: "The full soul loatheth the honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet," saith Solomon, Prov. xxvii. 7. What can be more precious, and more worthy of an eager appetite, than the flesh and blood of the Lord? what is more capable of satisfying the soul, than to eat and drink of this? it is indeed making Christ his sufferings, and all the good things of his testament our own, uniting ourselves to him in the most intimate manner, strengthening ourselves more by that meat and drink, that we may go, not only forty days and nights, but our whole lifetime, until we come to the mountain of God, like Elijah by the bread of angels. Yea, it is to satiate and delight ourselves fully and abundantly with the good things of the New Testament. Suffer me to excite your appetites by giving you a taste from the covenant of God, according to Jer. xxxi. 12, 13, 14, "Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine and for oil, and for the young of the flock, and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all. Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. And I will satiate the soul of the priests with

fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord." Do ye not know what this is; believers? It is the new name, the hidden manna, pardon of sins, peace with God, the shedding abroad of the love of God, secret communion and joy with and in the Lord. Let your "souls" therefore, with David, Psalm xliii. 1, 2, "thirst and pant after it, as a thirsty hart after the waterbrooks."

2 Do not only desire, but eat and drink also the flesh and blood of the Lord. Ye have a right to it: he suffered his body to be broken, and his blood to be shed for this purpose; he hath confirmed the testament by his death, that ye, his heirs, might "receive the promise of an eternal inheritance," Heb. ix. 15. He gives you also the bread and wine, as signs and seals; he instituted this sacrament that he might feed and nourish you with his flesh and blood: it is his will that ye should partake at his table plentifully. "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved," doth he cry, Song v. 1, and "open thy mouth wide," Psalm lxxxi. 10. Take therefore freely, and indulge your appetite. "Eat that which is good, and let your souls delight themselves in fatness," as he commandeth, Isaiah lv. Stretch forth the hand of your faith, lay hold on him and his benefits, that ye may receive him and his blessings in your hearts, may strengthen yourselves therewith, and delight yourselves therein, "that he may dwell in your hearts by faith, and that ye may be rooted and grounded in love; that ye may comprehend fully with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and may know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God," as we read, Eph. iii. 17, 18, 19.

3. Eat and drink nevertheless in a sacramental manner. As it is not enough to receive the bare signs, so it is not enough to partake of his flesh and blood spiritually; we can do this indeed every day, but the Lord Jesus hath instituted this sacrament more particularly for this purpose; he also gives his blessing with it, of which he grants you to taste repeatedly, and that he is good. The godly often act very improperly, when they receive the sacrament, looking for an immediate supply of soul satisfying grace, and when they do not obtain it, being troubled; but this is out of God's way, in which "he meeteth him who rejoiceth, and those who remember him in their ways," as it is said, Isaiah lxiv. 5. "We ought then to act upon and with the sacrament, that we may eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ thereby; and therefore to look upon the

bread and wine as signs of his flesh and blood, that we may by them be led up and enabled to see the painfulness, and the efficacy of his suffering and love to procure the pardon of sins, and to satisfy the hungry soul, and that he hath instituted these signs, and obligated us to use them, that we may by means of them think on him, and what he hath done and suffered: "Do this," saith he, "in remembrance of me." Yea, we ought to contemplate and receive the signs as seals, to assure the soul, that he hath truly suffered his body to be broken, and his blood to be shed for her, in order to obtain the remission of her sins, and that he also will assuredly feed and nourish her with his flesh and blood: and therefore we must rely upon his word of promise, and urge him by means of that word to satisfy and refresh us; for this belongs to the nature of the sacrament, and for this purpose the apostle delivers the institution of Christ to the churches in the text.

4. Doth he thus entertain you, do ye then also entertain him with the fruits of his sufferings and of his Spirit. A guest must sometimes be also a host; Jesus feasts you, that ye may also feast him. The soul so entertained by him and bedewed and fanned by his Spirit, must necessarily become fruitful and flourishing, and produce abundantly the fruits of humility, faith, love, hope, heavenly-mindedness, self-denial and thanksgivings; for when the Spirit, "the north wind awakes," to humble and cleanse her from her sins, and when "the south wind comes," in order to warm the soul with the love of Jesus, and blows upon the garden of the soul, then the spices thereof flow out, for which the spouse wished, Song iv. 16. Therefore invite Jesus also to eat his fruits; the spouse said, "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits." Fetch and call him in affectionately; saying "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, why standest thou without?" He would then come in, and say, as he did, Song v. 1. "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk," Let him then see you engage in a solemn manner at the administration of his supper, yea, repeatedly, to serve him; "show him your" humble "countenance, let him hear the voice" of your earnest prayers: "for your voice is sweet to him, and your countenance is comely," as he saith, Song ii. 14. Give him "the kiss, the spiced wine, and the juice of the pomegranates," of your faith, hope, self-denial, heavenly-mindedness and thanksgivings, for which the spouse was so ready, Song viii. 2. "While the king sitteth at his table,

your spikenard ought to send forth the smell thereof," Song i. 12.

5. But will it suffice to exercise fellowship with Jesus in such a separate manner, as if we were alone with him in the world? By no means. The supper is a common feast, designed for the exercise of fellowship with all those believers, who are invited to it, as appears from what hath been said above. We must therefore, as one people, and as fellow-partakers of Jesus and his benefits, "eat together with joy and singleness of heart," as the best Christians acted, Acts ii. 46. This also is not sufficient, but we ought to exercise also a constant communion with the saints, to which we solemnly obligate ourselves, and of which we make a public declaration in the supper; but of this we have spoken more fully on the twenty first Lord's day.

6. "Show forth the death of Christ until he come," according to the admonition of the apostle in the text. O how precious should his death be to you, for it is your bread, your life, your joy, your salvation and satisfaction, and ye should therefore think on it, contemplate its virtue, glory in it, and speak of it to others continually; that ye may excite them thereby to seek an interest in his sufferings and death. Hear how Paul acted in this manner, Gal. vi. 14. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." He gives you also the signs and seals of his death, that ye may think on it; he makes his death meat and drink for you, that he may "cause your lips to speak, even when ye sleep," Song vii. 9. We might cry out concerning his death by his Spirit, according to the prophecy of Zechariah, chap. ix. 17. "How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty! corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids." But show forth his death not only with your mouths and hearts, but also with your conversation, that men may see that ye are "become conformable to his death," as Paul endeavoured to be, Philip. iii. 10. This we would show, if by the virtue of his death we mortified our sinful selves, so that we lived only in him and for him, as Paul testifieth of himself, Gal. ii. 20. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." And he saith of believers, Col. iii. 3, "Ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God."

I add finally, complain not believers that ye are poor, for ye are rich in Christ, ye are enrolled as his heirs in his testament, and it is sealed: Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?" Thus speaks James, chap. ii. 5. "Ye are children, and therefore heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," saith Paul, Rom. viii. 17.

Is not this enough? Do ye not see many evidences of it yet, through all your tribulations? It will soon appear, when the full enjoyment of your inheritance shall be granted to you in that great supper of the Lord; for it is written, "Blesed are they," and they shall be blessed, "who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb," Rev. xix. 9. Amen.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION

CONFUTED.

XXIX. LORD'S DAY.

1 Cor. x. 15, 16. I speak as to wise men, judge ye, what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread, which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

Q. 78. *Do then the bread and wine become the very body and blood of Christ?*

A. Not at all; but as the water in baptism is not changed into the blood of Christ, neither is the washing away of sin itself, being only the sign and confirmation thereof appointed of God; so the bread in the Lord's supper is not changed into the very body of Christ; though agreeable to the nature and properties of sacraments it is called the body of Christ Jesus.

Q. 79. *Why then doth Christ call the bread his body, and the cup his blood, or the new covenant in his blood; and Paul "the communion of the body and blood of Christ?"*

A. Christ speaks thus not without great reason, not only thereby to teach us, that as bread and wine support this temporal life, so his crucified body and shed blood are the true meat and drink, whereby our souls are fed to eternal life; but more especially by these visible signs and pledges to assure us, that we are as really partakers of his

true body and blood (by the operation of the Holy Ghost) as we receive by the mouths of our bodies these holy signs in remembrance of him; and that all his sufferings and obedience are as certainly ours, as if we had in our own persons suffered and made satisfaction for our sins to God.

"THE natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;" thus speaks Paul, 1 Cor. ii. 14. The natural man is one who hath no more than what he hath received by his natural birth; "being born of the flesh, he is flesh," John iii. 6, and being thus without the Spirit, "not having the Spirit," Jude, vrs 19. And therefore he cannot know the spiritual things of God, they are foolishness to him, for his understanding is not disposed so, as to be able to know them, and it is incapable of such knowledge. The Spirit must irradiate his understanding with the light of spiritual things, that he may behold them in their proper light, if he shall receive and discern them: "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, must shine in his heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 6. For, according to the words of the apostle, Eph. iv. 18, "his understanding is darkened, he is alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him, and through the hardness of his heart." How then should he apprehend divine and spiritual things, and not reject them as foolishness? Natural men have often manifested this, when they have exalted their "imaginations, their thoughts," and imaginary "heights against the knowledge of God." If natural men could understand divine things, Hymeneus and Philetus would never have erred concerning the truth; Jannes and Jambres would not have withstood Moses; the Libertines and others would not have disputed with Stephen; the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers would not have railed at Paul, as a babler, and Felix would not have said that he was mad. Whence is it, that so many withstand the truth, and how doth it happen that so many monstrous and foolish opinions are entertained in the Christian world? do they not proceed from "men of corrupt minds?" Paul tells us that they do, 2 Tim. iii. 8. It is still more evident, that the natural man doth not receive nor discern divine things, when those spiritual things are proposed to him under corporeal similitudes and emblems. These ought to illustrate those things to him, but through the corruption of his understanding, they become still more obscure by

means of these emblems: even "Nicodemus, a master in Israel," could not understand the effectual work of God in conversion, when Jesus explained it to him under the emblem of a birth; and therefore the Saviour said to him, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you heavenly things?" John iii. 12. When Jesus spake of enjoying fellowship with him under the emblem of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, the Capernaites could not discern these things spiritually, but imagined that he spoke of a bodily eating of his flesh, and drinking of his blood, which appeared like foolishness to them, and caused them to say, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat? this is a hard saying, who can hear it?" John vi. 52, 60. Do the Papists, the true offspring of the Capernaites, conduct better, when they say that the bread and wine are changed into the very body and blood of Christ, because he said of the signs in the supper, "This is my body, this is my blood," when these things are not the very body and blood of Christ, but, as the text saith, the communion of his body and blood?

In order to illustrate this we must

I. Exhibit the state of the controversy,

II. Confute the erroneous opinion,

III. Answer the objections of the adversaries.

I. The state of the controversy is whether "the bread and wine be changed into the very body and blood of Christ," as the instructor asks in the seventy eighth question. Therefore we have not to do here so much with the Lutherans, who fancy that Christ is present by a consubstantiation, in, with, and among the bread and wine, in a bodily manner, and that we eat and drink him in this manner. This erroneous opinion proceeds from a misunderstanding of the omnipresence of Christ, as though he were present every where as man; but we will not busy ourselves purposely with this, because we have already proved on the eighteenth Lord's day, that Christ is not present every where with his body, and because the arguments which we will produce against the opinion of which we shall speak now, will for the most part confute the opinion of the Lutherans also. The instructor proposes chiefly the controversy between us and the Papists, who fancy that the bread and wine of the supper are changed into the very body and blood of Christ by a transubstantiation, or substantial change. They imagine that upon the low mumbling of these five Latin words, *hoc enim est meum corpus*, "for this is my body," by a lawful priest, who hath a right intention, the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ, or that the substance of the bread and wine vanisheth, and that the body and blood

of Christ descend in a moment from heaven, in the stead of the substance of the bread and wine, the outward form of bread and wine, to wit, the size, colour, smell and taste nevertheless remaining. After which essential change the signs of the supper are no longer bread and wine, but the very body and blood of Christ; yea, that every distinct crumb and drop is the whole Christ, as he was born of Mary, and as he was humbled and exalted, and that he is eaten and drunk in this manner.

We will allow that the bread and wine undergo a certain change, inasmuch as they are set apart by the word of blessing from a common to a sacramental use, and thus have a special relation to the body and blood of Christ. We also acknowledge most readily, that Christ is present in the supper, according to the nature of the sacrament, in a three fold manner, (a) sacramentally, signifying and sealing his suffering and death. (b) According to his Godhead, which is present every where, and especially with this institution. (c) He is also actively present in the supper by his holy Spirit, causing us to eat his body, and drink his blood sacramentally and spiritually; but we deny without scruple, that Christ is bodily present in the sacrament, that the bread and wine are changed into his body and blood, and that we eat and drink him in a bodily manner.

II. We do not reject this opinion from levity, but on account of weighty reasons; for,

1. The Lord Jesus hath a real body; for "he was made like his brethren in all things," as Paul saith, Heb. ii. 17; therefore he cannot be present in many places, much less in every place at the same time: this hath been shown more fully on the eighteenth Lord's day. How is it then possible that he should be present according to the body wherever the supper is received; that the bread and wine should be changed into his body and blood; and that every individual should eat and drink of them? or do men know not only how to change bread and wine into a whole Christ, but also how to change them into many Christs? to what doth all this tend?

2. It hath been shown before, that to a sacrament pertains a sign and a thing signified; but by transubstantiation, the signs, bread and wine, are changed into the things signified, the body and blood of Christ, and so the signs, yea, the whole nature of the sacrament is abolished.

3. We do not find such a substantial change in any of the other sacraments. Circumcision, the sacrament, sign, and seal of God's covenant was never changed into God's covenant; the paschal lamb was not changed into the Lord's passover, nor the angel who passed

through Egypt, into Christ. All the ceremonies of the Old Testament were sacramental signs and seals of Christ, and of his benefits: but not one of them was ever changed into Christ. It cannot be said in reply to this, that those signs were not changed into the thing signified, because they were bare types of the sacraments of the New-Testament; for this is not true, as we have proved upon the twenty-fifth Lord's day. But besides this, baptism is a sacrament of the New-Testament; but the water in baptism is not changed into the blood of Christ, neither is it the washing away of sin itself, as hath appeared before: what reason then can there be, why the signs of the Lord's supper should be changed into the things signified, more than the signs of the other sacraments?

4. This substantial change militates also against the words of the institution and of the blessing, "this is my body," by the low mumbling of which words in Latin, they will make the body and blood of Christ of the bread and wine; for the word "this" relates to the bread, which Christ took, broke, and distributed with the cup, but not to the body and blood of Christ; the verb substantive "is," doth not change these signs, but simply showeth that the bread and wine are sacramental. The following words, "my body," do not effect any change, yea, they do not make a full sense by themselves, but only as they are connected with the verb substantive "is," which doth not change. The Papists will have that the bread is not changed by the word *hoc*, "this," nor by the word *est*, "is," nor by the word *corpus*, "body," nor by the word *meum*, "my;" but only by *um*, the last syllable of *meum*, "my." But what is there in this syllable *um*, that it can do more than Christ, or the apostles did? for they never made flesh and blood, much less a whole Christ, and many Christs of bread and wine. What magician ever performed any uncommon feat by mumbling two letters? The Egyptian magicians knew how to change rods into serpents, and water into blood by their enchantments, but this was a mere childish trick in comparison with the magic art of the Papists, who are able to do so much greater, yea, unheard of wonders, with two letters. Who will believe this? surely none who will not renounce his humanity. The apostle Paul calls the signs bread and the cup, even after they have been blessed, 1 Cor. xi. 26—28. It is true, things that have been changed retain their names, which they had before; the serpents of Moses and of the Magicians are called rods after they were become serpents, Exod. vii. 2, and Simon is called a leper after he was cleansed, Matt xxvi. 6. But there were then certain and indisputable evidences, that those things were truly changed: every per-

son could see that those rods were no longer rods, but serpents, and that Simon was no longer a leper, since they were all changed, not only with respect to their nature, but also with respect to their accidents: let the Papists show us this also of the bread and wine, and that it is no longer bread and wine, but the body and blood of Christ, yea, the whole Christ, as he was humbled and exalted, and we will then see, that the signs are called bread and wine according to their former, and not according to their present nature.

5. The end for which the supper was instituted was "the remembrance" of Christ. Now it is evident, that we neither institute, nor give any thing in remembrance of aught that is present; the passover was a memorial, to cause Israel and his posterity to remember the benefit which had been shown to them formerly, that their firstborn were spared, and not slain in Egypt, Exod. xii. 14, 24—27. Therefore Christ cannot be present, according to his body, in the supper, neither can the bread and wine be the real body and blood of Christ: for otherwise the supper would not be a memorial of him.

6. This Popish pretence militates against many articles of the faith, which all Christians, yea, which the Papists themselves receive: for every one confesseth that God alone is the Almighty Maker; but they subvert this by their doctrine of transubstantiation; the priest, since he makes Christ of bread and wine, and that as often as he pleases, is therefore above the Almighty Maker, who cannot make a God, any more than he can deny himself: but the priest can say, "He who created me without me, is created by me," "We believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary; who suffered," &c. But how can men, who pretend to believe the same things with us, say that the Christ who is under the forms of bread and wine, is the only begotten Son of the Father, conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of Mary? He is surely made of bread. Did the breaden God of the Papists suffer? did he die, was he buried, and did he descend into hell? did he rise again and ascend into heaven, and sit at the right hand of God? doth he come down out heaven? and is there no Christ then in heaven? and is all this done at the beck of the masspriest? and that a thousand times? How doth this agree with the catholic creed? who dares, who can contrive and utter such fantastical things? Away with the creed of every Christian, if the Papists believe rightly here.

7. We must deny our senses, if we shall believe that bread and wine are the flesh and blood of Christ; for this militates against nearly all the senses of every man at all times; all men do at all

times see bread and wine in the supper, they smell, taste, and feel them, and must say without any scruple, that such a small fragment, or round wafer hath neither the bulk, nor the form, nor the members of a man, as Christ was. How then can the flesh and blood of a whole Christ be there? Could those priests delude our senses, and those of every other man, as they pretend that they can change the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, they would then gain much of us: but they fall short here, and therefore they seek to put us off with words, saying that the bodily senses cannot judge of spiritual mysteries. We say this also of mysteries, which are wholly spiritual; but the mystery of the Lord's supper is partly bodily, and the dispute relates only to that part of it which is bodily: they say that there is no bread nor wine in the supper, but only Christ, his body and blood; this we deny. What now is more proper than that we should judge of that which is bodily by our bodily senses? Did not Christ appeal to the trial of the outward senses, when the apostles doubted whether he were risen, and might not be a Spirit? Luke xxiv. 36—41. But say these men, the outward senses can be deceived. True, when the senses are disordered, the object far off, and when some other body is between our senses and the object; but who will say that the senses fail, when they are not disordered, when the object is near at hand, and when there is no let between the object and the senses? And when the senses of all men judge in the same manner at all times, must we then yet pluck out our eyes, stop our nostrils, deny our taste, and cut off our hands? must I be wilfully and knowingly a fool, that I may believe that *horrendum mysterium*, "that horrible mystery?"

8. This transubstantiation militates against the nature of every change; for when any thing is changed, then (a) that which is changed, is changed not only in its nature, but also in its forms, qualities and accidents, which are changed as well as its nature: when the rods were changed into serpents, the water into blood, the dust into lice, they had not then any longer the forms, qualities, and accidents of rods, water, and dust, but of serpents, blood, and lice: but these men will have that bread and wine are flesh and blood, yea, the whole Christ: when notwithstanding the colour, smell, taste, and all the outward forms of bread and wine remain. (b) When one thing is changed into another, a new thing is then produced and created by a miracle; for instance, when the water was changed into wine, John ii. 9, 10, 11, the wine, which did not exist before, was then newly created by a miracle; but when bread and wine are changed into Christ, is he then newly created? he was not then be-

fore. And so transubstantiation must lead a person to deny the Saviour.

9. Finally, this mystery of iniquity is replete with absurdities; for if there be such an essential change, the creature must then eat his God, consume him in his stomach, and cast him forth into the draught. Abominable! yea, more abominable than the practice of the ancient idolaters, condemned of old, "who made a God of part of the wood, by which they warmed themselves, baked bread, and roasted roast," in order to satisfy their appetite, and worshiped that God, Isaiah xliv. 14—20. The Popish God may be devoured by every kind of vermin, and may moulder in itself. Observe this contradiction, the priest saith, "This is my body," and yet the bread doth not become his body upon those words, when he nevertheless speaks of his own body, but it becomes the body of another, even of Christ. What a wonderful kind of philosophy have these men, when they must persuade themselves by transubstantiation, that substances, Christ, his flesh and blood can exist without forms, qualities, or accidents, flesh and blood without the colour, smell or taste of flesh and blood, that a human body of an ordinary stature and bulk, can exist and be contained in a small, and slender wafer! still more wonders, forms, qualities and accidents can exist without substances and essences, in which they inhere; the colour, smell and taste of bread and wine can exist, when there is no bread and wine; yea, one substance can have the forms, qualities and accidents of another substance, which hath not those of its own. The flesh and blood of Christ, which have not the colour, smell or taste of flesh and blood, have that of bread and wine. How do they extricate themselves here? They say, we must not hearken to reason, when we attend to the mysteries of faith, but must lead reason captive: but this is a matter in dispute, whether transubstantiation be a mystery; we deny it: the mysteries of faith are indeed above, but not contrary to reason; but this Popish invention is contrary to reason, and must therefore be rejected by reason. Let it be admitted, that this doctrine of the Papists is a mystery, it is however in part bodily, and must therefore be examined by reason. When scripture subjects reason to her, she doth not then deprive us of our reason, but will rather employ it even with respect to this opinion, also; therefore the man of God saith in our text, "I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say; the cup of blessing," &c. This cloak of shame helps still less, when we consider that we attack transubstantiation not only by arguments from reason, but also from scripture.

III. But do not those men offer aught, in order to prove this doctrine? yes, What do they alledge?

1. They are very ready to say, that God is almighty, and is able to change the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ upon the muttering of the five words: But can God, because he is almighty, do aught that is a contradiction? God is almighty, yet "he cannot deny himself," Titus ii. 13. "He cannot lie," Titus i. 2. "It is impossible for God to lie," Heb. vi. 18. And so it is also impossible for him to change the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ; for it is a contradiction, that the body of Christ, which exists already, should exist afterwards newly; that his body should be at the same time in heaven and on earth; and that it should be at the same time both great and small; but although there were no contradiction in this, and although God could do it, doth he therefore do it? can we conclude that a thing really is, because it can be? God could make thousands of men more on the earth than he hath made; doth he therefore make them? No: God doth not do all that he can, but all that he will, and "whatsoever he pleaseth," according to Psalm cxv. 3. We must be certain, that he will do a thing, before we conclude from his power that he will do it, or that he doth it at present. The leper reasoned better than the Papists, when he said to Jesus, Matt. viii. 2, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Therefore they must prove that God will do it, if he even can do it.

2. They imagine that they are clear here, because Christ saith, "This is my body, and the cup is my blood," Matt. xxvi. 26, 27, 28. But there are many learned men among the Papists, who perceive that this passage is not to be understood literally, and therefore they betake themselves to their traditions: Scotus saith, "I hold this proposition, because the church holds it." G. Athaides, a divine of the king of Portugal at the council of Trent, disapproved of making use of the scripture in this controversy, that they might not be ridiculed by the heretics; and he said that the words, "this is my body," were much plainer, when they were not understood in the sense of the church of Rome, than when they were so understood;" and the cardinal Cajetan, said, "that there was no necessity to understand these words in their literal sense." Was he not right? For (a) Christ calls himself "a door," John x. 9, "the way," John xiv. 6, and "the true vine," John xv. 1. No man will therefore say that he was changed into a door, a way and vine. What reason have we then to say from Matt. xxvi. 20, 27, 28, that bread and wine are

changed into his flesh and blood? And, that we may abide by the words, "this is my body," Paul saith of believers that they are "the body of Christ," 1 Cor. xii. 26. Why should we then understand one and the same phrase more literally in one passage than in another. (b) The words, "this is my body," are to be understood according to the usual phraseology of the Hebrews, who said, this is, instead of this signifieth. We see this in Joseph's exposition of Pharaoh's dream. Gen. xli. 26, 27. "The seven kine and the seven ears are seven years." For the Hebrews have no word which answers to our word, "it signifies." Do not we ourselves say of a picture, or of a graven image, this is that man, that woman? do not ask us then, why Christ did not rather say, this signifieth my body, than this is my body, if he meant, this signifieth my body; for he spoke according to the usual language of his people. (c) This is a sacramental phrase, according to the nature of all the sacraments, in which the name of the thing signified is given to the sign. Circumcision is called "the covenant of God," Gen. xvii. "The lamb the Lord's passover," that is, passing over, Exod. xii. Christ also is called "our passover, sacrificed for us," 1 Cor. v. 7 and Paul saith, "The Rock was Christ," 1 Cor. x. 4 Baptism is also called "the washing away of sins," Acts xxii. 16. Why then should we depart from this sacramental phraseology in the supper? there is no reason; but there are indeed reasons and causes why Christ calls the bread and wine his body and blood. Surely not to teach us transubstantiation, for this is a contradiction, but for two reasons; first, on account of the agreement of the sign with the thing signified. because of the word of institution; and then on account of the sealing virtue of this sacrament, according to the word of promise. This is clearly discovered to us in the seventy ninth question, which read: we have explained it more fully on the former Lord's day (d) We add to this also that the words, "this is my body," cannot be understood literally; for if we understand them so, then Christ was whole and broken, alive and dead at the table; for the supper exhibits him as dead; he did then eat his own flesh, and drink his own blood; the apostles did then eat his broken body, and drink his shed blood, while he sat at the table. Paul explains these words spiritually, when he calls bread and wine in the text the communion of the body and blood of Christ. The Papists themselves cannot understand these words literally, because they must explain the word "is" by "let it be, or become," and they must explain the cup by the wine which is in the cup Let them do then what they will, they cannot find a proof of transubstantiation in those words. Therefore it can-

not avail the Romanists to say that we must speak plainly in a will, and that Christ made his will here; for Christ did not make his will here, but gave the seal of it; and besides this, the figurative sense is plain, and agreeable to the nature of all sacraments. It it said that we ought to speak plainly in a will; we deny it: for Jacob spake figuratively, when he made his will, Gen. xlix. It is not customary to speak literally in sacraments; if Christ had spoken literally in the supper, his words would have been dark and unintelligable to a people, who were accustomed to figurative phrases in the sacraments. The Papists themselves, as hath been shown, cannot take these words in their literal sense.

3. They imagine that the Lord Jesus decides this controversy on their side, when he saith, John vi. 55, 56. "My flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." We reply to this, first of all, that Christ doth not speak here of the supper, and that these words do not therefore serve their purpose; for the supper was not yet instituted, when Christ spake these words, and he had not respect in them to the breaking of his body, and the shedding of his blood, as in the supper, but to the manna, as appeareth from the foregoing and following parts of this chapter. But however this may be, these words cannot be understood literally; for then our communion with Christ would be a bodily communion, and he would have communion with the ungodly. Christ, when we receive his flesh and his blood, "dwells in us, as we dwell in him" that is, spiritually, for who can exist bodily in Christ? The Saviour himself will not permit us to understand these words literaliy, as the Capernaites understood them; for he saith, vrs. 63. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life." But Christ saith that his flesh and blood are meat and drink "indeed." Must it then be proper meat and drink? No, for spiritual meat and drink is meat and drink indeed for the soul. Christ is "the true light," John i. 9, "the true vine," John xv. 1, yet he is not therefore a proper, but a spiritual light and vine.

4. Antiquity is for us, say these men; but hear what others of the Popish communion say. One saith, the fathers (they spoke indeed as we do on this subject) spake unadvisedly; another, before the Lateran council, every one might believe in this matter as he pleased: a third, before that council transubstantiation was not yet an article of faith; they saw indeed that before the eighth century, there was neither jot nor tittle of transubstantiation to be found in

the writings of the fathers. It is also evident ; for when in the year 754, the council of Constantinople condemned the images, they gave this reason for that condemnation, that they had the image of Christ, the substance, the nature of bread, in the supper. The worshippers of images, seeing themselves forshamed and condemned by this proceeding, restored the images in the year 787, in the second council of Nice, saying that the bread was not an image of Christ, but his very body, not by a transubstantiation, but by the union of the bread and wine with the Godhead, the nature of the bread and wine nevertheless remaining, as John Damascene spake. This caused much contention among the ecclesiastics in the following centuries ; but in the tenth century, that iron and leaden age, the opinion of the bodily presence of Christ in the supper gained ground ; and in the eleventh century Berenger, because he opposed the bodily presence of Christ in the supper, was condemned in three councils. The word transubstantiation was used first of all by a certain Stephen, bishop of Autun, in Burgundy, in the year 1130; and in the year 1215, the council of Lateran authorized it, allowing it to be used of the Lord's supper. This new doctrine could not however obtain the approbation of the council of Florence, in the year 1439 ; but this mystery of iniquity was fully established in the council of Trent. How then can they talk of antiquity ; the ancients of the first and best antiquity knew nothing of the substantial change of the bread and wine ; and when the innovators began to mutter these things from a love of images, they were immediately opposed until they had mastered the truth, suppressed it. and endeavoured to banish it out of the world ; but the witnesses, who had been slain, were raised up, and stand until this day on their feet, to bear witness against the Romish apostacy.

But are we then, as the Papists slander us, Socinians, who assert that the supper contains only bare signs, to serve as memorials and representations, that the body of Christ was broken, and his blood shed for the confirmation of his heavenly doctrine? No, we have professed before, that Christ was present here in a sacramental manner ; working in a divine and spiritual manner, and that we eat and drink him thus : and therefore we detest the Socinians, who say that the whole virtue of the covenant consists in the signification of the breaking of the bread, and the pouring out of the wine, representing the suffering of Christ, as a prophet ; for they deny thus the satisfaction of Christ by his "blood, shed for the remission of sins," the sealing virtue of the supper, and the true and spiritual communion of believers with his sufferings, body and blood. But is a sa-

crament then nothing more than a bare sign and figure, and not a seal also? doth Christ say no more than, this is a memorial of my body and blood, when he calls the bread and wine his body and blood, and the New Testament in his blood? and is nothing but the breaking of the bread, and the pouring out of the wine significative, and is not the eating and drinking of what he calls his body and blood so too? and have believers then no communion with his body and blood? But in this manner must the Socinians, that they may overturn the foundations of Christianity, enervate the sacraments, and the words of Jesus, who never spake one word in vain; but we have learned better, and have more reverence than this for the institutions and words of God; and therefore nothing but a mere desire to slander us induces the Papists to say that we give only bare signs.

APPLICATION.

See, hearers, the orthodoxy and unblamableness of our doctrine, and the conformity of it to the word of God, since we do not ascribe too much to the sacraments, that we may avoid Popery, nor too little, that we may avoid Socinianism. But, hearers, those of you who receive this supper at any time, is your practice likewise so orthodox and unblamable? It would be your happiness, and conduce to the glory of Jesus, and of his church if it were; but how many are there of you, who do not conduct aright in this matter! for,

1. Some act toward this supper no otherwise than Socinians, and as if it were a mere sign of a Christian profession. Is it not true? for have ye had any exercises of soul with respect to the spiritual matters, which are exhibited and sealed in the supper, so that ye did by faith behold and enjoy Christ in his sufferings, benefits, and love, eat his flesh and drink his blood, when ye received the signs? Verily many know nothing of this; it sufficeth them to be good Christians, to appear at the table, to receive the bread and wine, to eat and drink of it, especially if they think at the time of the sufferings and death of Christ; they imagine then that they have quitted themselves well; but was it our duty to forsake the Papists, that we might receive nothing but bare signs? doth this suffice to eat Christ's flesh and drink his blood? doth this prove that his body was broken, and his blood shed for the remission of sins? I conceive not.

I assure you, who conduct in this manner, that ye do thus deny our true Christian communion, our purified doctrine, and your profession, that ye have no part in him, and his sufferings, and that the supper is no seal to you Hear how Jesus confirms this with a double verily, John vi. 53, "Verily, verily I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

2. Others conduct toward the supper like the Papists. We have departed out of the Romish Egypt, but many return thither again in their hearts. It is evident; for they hold that it is absolutely necessary to partake of this sacrament, as if that were conversion, an entering into Christ and into his covenant by faith, a partaking of the signs, eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of the Lord. Doth it not appear, friends, when ye are perfectly easy and unconcerned about the forgiveness of your sins, and your eternal salvation? for ye have no other ground for your hope. And observe, before ye approach to the supper, ye are somewhat concerned and uneasy, ye will then be moral, and desist in some measure from your usual sins and dissoluteness; but after ye have partaken, presently both your anxiety and morality are at an end, and ye return to your old sins and dissoluteness again. What think ye, do ye, who behave thus, conduct at all differently from the Papists, who think, when they eat the bread in the supper, that they eat Christ himself, and therefore are satisfied, and unconcerned? do ye not evidence by this conduct that ye are sensual, not having the Spirit? do ye not show that ye are Papists in your hearts? What doth it mean to trust in the flesh, of which Paul disapproveth, Phil. iii. 3, if it be not this? Cannot Christ's flesh profit us, as he informs us, John vi. 63, how then can the bread and wine profit us, without his Spirit, who quickeneth us? Alas! how will your ungrounded rest be disturbed, when ye shall pretend that ye "have eaten and drunk in the presence of Christ; for he will say to you, I know you not, whence ye are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." He foretels this himself, Luke xiii. 26, 27.

Therefore rouse up from your carelessness, awake and be earnestly engaged in seeking an interest in his body and blood, that your sins may be forgiven, and that ye may thus partake of the supper, as a sign and seal.

But with respect to you, O believers, whose souls cannot be satisfied, nor contented with the bread and wine, endeavour to conduct more orthodoxly toward the sacrament, and therefore,

1. Seek a distinct knowledge and apprehension of the nature of

the supper: we must "discern the body of the Lord" in the supper, if we do not wish to "eat and drink judgment to ourselves," 1 Cor. xi 29. In this respect Paul saith in the text, "I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say." We must therefore become wise, if we shall conduct judiciously toward this seal of the covenant; we are sometimes assaulted by deceivers, who corrupt the sacrament; if we have not our senses then well exercised, how shall we defend ourselves, and vindicate the precious truth? We must conduct ourselves wisely, and according to the rule of faith, in partaking of the supper; but we cannot do this if we have not a sufficient knowledge of it; therefore endeavour to "grow not only in grace, but also in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ," as Peter admonisheth, 2 Peter iii. 18.

2. Be not satisfied with knowing Christ only in the letter, and in the outward signs, but endeavour to know him also in the Spirit, nevertheless according to the word: "He hath given you an understanding, that ye may know him who is true," according to 1 John v. 20. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in your hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ," saith Paul 2 Cor. iv. 6. It behooves you to exercise yourselves in this, "that ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding," as the same apostle desired, Col. i. 9. This would not only warm your souls, quicken you by the supper, and deliver you, who know the truth, from the power of your corruption, but, if I may so speak, would transubstantiate, or change you into a conformity to Christ; for when he is contemplated in his excellency, he transmits by such a contemplation his glorious holiness, and holy glory into the soul, as Paul teacheth, 2 Cor. iii. 18. "We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The apostle hath respect to Moses, whose face shone with a dazzling brightness, in consequence of his beholding the Lord on the mount. See Exod. xxxiv. 29, 30, 3. Verily a better and a more real change than the Popish transubstantiation.

3. Have nevertheless a becoming esteem for the outward signs, that ye may contemplate and use them with reverence in the presence of the Lord. The signs, considered in themselves, are profitable only to the body, but considered sacramentally, they are the bread and wine of the Lord. They are indeed signs instituted by the Lord himself, they signify the most important mysteries, the painful sufferings, the testament, the forgiveness of sins, and a partaking of

the flesh and blood of the Lord; they are seals and pledges of these things: the Lord hath enjoined on you to make use of them, that ye may, by means of them, eat his flesh and drink his blood, yea, he breathes his Spirit into them, and so causes you to eat his flesh and to drink his blood, and he thereby "sups with you, and ye with him," as he promiseth, Rev. iii. 20. Therefore the text saith, "the bread and the cup are the communion of the body and blood of Christ," and 1 Cor. xi. 27. "The bread and cup of the Lord."

4. Endeavour therefore also to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Lord in and by these signs. If we will "live, and desire that we should dwell in him; and he in us, we must then eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man," according to his word, John vi. 53, 56. Therefore he said, when he gave the bread and the cup to his disciples, "Take, eat and drink; for this is my body and blood." See what we have said on the former Lord's day, in the application.

Show then also the virtue of the sacrament in all your conversation, that men may see that ye have not partaken merely of the signs, but also of the things signified by them, to wit, Christ himself, his flesh and blood. Your eyes ought, like the eyes of Jonathan, 1 Samuel xiv. 29, to be "enlightened," upon your tasting only "a little of this honey;" your "countenances" ought, by feeding on this "pulse and this water" of life, to become fairer and fatter than the countenances" of the courtiers of earthly kings, who are feasted with royal dainties. See Dan. i. 15. Did "Elijah travel forty days and nights in the strength of a cake baken on the coals, until he came to Horeb, the mount of God," 1 kings xix. 6, 7, 8, and ought not ye then, by means of the bread and the wine of the Lord, to be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, so that ye could run and not be weary, and walk and not faint," according to Eph. vi. 10, Isaiah xl. 10. Ye ought certainly to show that ye resembled Christ in some measure, that men might "know that ye had been with him," as it is said of Peter and John, Acts ix. 13. "The life of Jesus ought to be manifest in your mortal flesh," as Paul speaks, 2 Cor. iv. 11. It was indeed foretold concerning you, Isaiah lvi. 9. "All that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed." Let then the image of Jesus, even humility, meekness, self-denial and heavenly-mindedness shine forth in you.

Thus ye will evidence that ye enjoy more than the Papists pretend; yea, that ye are even "crucified with Christ and live; yet not

ye, but Christ in you," as Paul testifieth of himself, Gal. ii. 20. The erroneous Papist imagines that his Christ, whom he hath made, remains in his stomach, while he nevertheless casts him forth into the draught; but ye, who eat and drink him truly, spiritually, and sacramentally, shall retain him in your souls for ever; "ye dwell in him, and he dwells in you," as he himself saith, John vi 56, which will be more especially manifested, when the signs shall be taken away, and ye shall be changed after his likeness; for "we now see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face," as the apostle saith, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. This sight of him will render you like him; "We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is," saith the disciple, whom Jesus loved, 1 John iii. 2. Even your body, which is now corruptible, mortal and vile, "the Lord Jesus will," as Paul saith, Philip. iii. 21, "change, that it may be fashioned like his glorious body, according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself," Amen.

OF THE MASS,

AND THE RIGHT PARTAKERS

OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

XXX. LORD'S DAY.

1 Cor. x. 18—21. Behold Israel after the flesh; are not they which eat of the sacrifice partakers of the altar? What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

Q. 80. *What difference is there between the Lord's supper, and the Popish mass?*

A. The Lord's supper testifies to us, that we have a full pardon of all sin by the only sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which he himself has once accomplished on the cross; and that we by the Holy Ghost are ingrafted into Christ, who, according to his human nature is now not on earth, but in heaven, at the right hand of God the Father, and will there be worshipped by us; but the mass teacheth that the living and dead have not the pardon of sins through the sufferings of

Christ, unless Christ be also daily offered for them by the priests; and further, that Christ is bodily under the form of bread and wine, and therefore is to be worshipped in them; so that the mass is at bottom nothing else than a denial of the one sacrifice and sufferings of Jesus Christ, and an accursed idolatry.

Q 81. *For whom is the Lord's supper instituted?*

A. For those who are truly sorrowful for their sins, and yet trust that these are forgiven them for the sake of Christ; and that their remaining infirmities are covered by his passion and death; and who also earnestly desire to have their faith more and more strengthened, and their lives more holy; but hypocrites, and such as turn not to God with sincere hearts, eat and drink judgment to themselves.

Q. 82. Are they also to be admitted to this supper, who by confession and life declare themselves infidels and ungodly?

A. No; for by this the covenant of God would be profaned, and his wrath kindled against the whole congregation; therefore it is the duty of the Christian church, according to the appointment of Christ and his apostles, to exclude such persons by the keys of the kingdom of heaven, until they show amendment of life.

"WEEDS will always remain." This is a common proverb, and it is not without a reason. God hath, on account of the sin of Adam, which was also the sin of the whole human race, "cursed the earth, and condemned it to bring forth thorns and thistles," according to Gen. iii. 17, 19. Weeds are also very fruitful: though we root them out ever so carefully, the corrupt earth will still yield and bring them forth again. It is just so with heresies and errours concerning the doctrine of the truth; they will never in this life be wholly rooted and purged out of the church. The Lord esteems them to be always necessary for the church, in order to try and exercise her. The apostle saith, 1 Cor. xi. 19. "There must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." Yea, when once an errour concerning the doctrine of the faith possesseth a person, it will grow like weeds: "Evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived," as Paul forewarns us, 2 Tim. iii. 13. The heretical "words of Hymeneus and Philetus will eat like a canker," saith the same man, 2 Tim. ii. 17. Erroneous persons are too obstinate to retract what they conceive they have once rightly apprehended; and they cannot maintain one errour easily without glossing it over, and making it appear plausible by another. If we should not exceed the

limits of an introduction, we should show distinctly and in order how the first erroneous tenets of our adversaries, as the lordship of the church of Rome, the indifferent freewill of the Pelagians and Semipelagians, and the enthusiasm of the Quakers have hatched every other errour. It will suffice at present to see the power of errour in the transubstantiation of the Papists: they said at first, in order to introduce images into the church, that Christ was in a bodily manner present in the supper. Although the faithful labourers bestirred themselves to root these weeds out of the field of the Lord, it was to no purpose, the weeds remained and spread the more: those who nursed them did not know how to preserve them, unless they would say that Christ was present by a transubstantiation, or substantial changing of the bread and wine into his body and blood. Having asserted this, they were ready to teach also, that Christ must be offered up for sins, and worshipped in the supper, which is called the mass by the Romanists; verily evil weeds; we will not endeavour to root them out, but with the instructor to discover the abominable nature of them, that every one may beware of them.

The instructor exhibits three particulars in this Lord's day, as subjects of exposition.

I. The abomination of the Popish mass, Question 80.

II. Who are, and who are not proper partakers of the Lord's supper, Question 81.

III. In what manner the church ought to preserve this supper from those who would profane it, Question 82.

I. With respect to the first particular, the instructor asks, "What difference is there between the Lord's supper and the Popish mass?" Why doth he ask this question? will he recommend the Popish mass to us? no, but he asks thus, that he may refute the mass; for if there be so great a difference between the Lord's supper, and the Popish mass, then the mass is not the Lord's supper, as the Romanists pretend; but that the common people may not perceive this, they have changed the name of the supper, and called it the mass. This name mass was not heard in the church during the first four centuries, but was after that, used by the Latin church, when they dismissed the catechumens, before the administration of the supper, and the communicants at the separating of the congregation; for then they said, *ite, missa est*, that is, go, ye are dismissed, or the congregation is dismissed. It would therefore be an utter absurdity to seek for this word, either in the Hebrew or Greek language, unless we would seek for it in Daniel's prophecy of Antichrist, and his

God *Mausim*,* Dan. xi 36—39. We will indeed find Antichrist and his breaden God depicted there in lively colours. Many have proved with abundant evidence, that these words do not relate to Antiochus Epiphanes, but to the Romish Antichrist. And therefore we may observe the secret judgment of God here, that the Papists have given the name of mass to this mystery of iniquity; for, according to the prophecy of Paul, who describes Antichrist in nearly the same words with Daniel, "God hath sent them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." See 2 Thess. ii. 3—11.

But of what consequence would the name be, if the matter only were good; but the matter also is detestable. They say that the mass is an unbloody sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ under the forms of bread and wine, which the mass-priests offer up to God, in order to procure forgiveness of sins for the quick and the dead, and which must be worshipped by the people. In order to serve this mass well they play strange pranks, one while the priest walks, then he stands, then he turns round, then he bows, then he raises himself up, then he crosses himself, then he pronounces a blessing, then he is silent, then he cries aloud, either speaking or singing, &c. His dress is fantastical, and his expressions are singular: there are pontifical and episcopal, high and low, private and public, red, black, green and violet masses, masses for the quick and the dead, for sick kine, sheep and swine. Who can reckon up all the oddities of the mass? What think ye, hearers, are these things like the Lord's supper, in which they seek the mass? did Christ either do or command aught like this in the supper?

But that the falsehood and abominableness of the mass may be more plainly exhibited, the catechism points out a threefold difference between the Lord's supper and the popish mass.

1. The first difference is, that "the Lord's supper testifieth to us, that we have a full pardon of all sin by the only sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which he himself has once accomplished on the cross." The word of God teacheth us, that "believers are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Now, where remission of sins is, there is no more offering for sin." Thus speaks the apostle, Heb. x. 10, 14, 18. The supper testifieth this, for "both word and sacraments are appointed to this end, that they may direct our faith to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, as the only ground of our

* The Dutch translation retains the original word *Mausim*, which the English translation renders forces.

salvation; this we have shown on the sixty seventh question. In opposition to this "the mass teaches that the living and dead have not the pardon of their sins through the sufferings of Christ, unless Christ be also daily offered for them by the priests." And so the mass teaches us a doctrine wholly different from that which the Lord's supper teaches; for (a) in the institution of the supper we do not find aught, that resembles a sacrifice, nor that a sacrifice was instituted: we find there indeed a feast, but no sacrifice. (b) If Christ had offered himself up in the supper, his sacrifice on the cross would have been unnecessary. Christ's sacrifice on the cross would have been a repetition, and an application of his sacrifice in the supper, and thus altogether different from what the Papists assert, who fancy that the sacrifice of the mass is a repetition and application of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. (c) If Christ be offered up in the supper for sins, we have not then a perfect forgiveness of sins by Christ's only sacrifice on the cross, contrary to what hath been said above from Heb. x. 10, 11, 18, Christ hath not then accomplished all things, contrary to his declaration, "It is finished," when "he gave up the ghost," John xix. 30. (d) Then deceased believers have still sins, contrary to what Paul saith, Rom. vi. 7. "He that is dead is freed from sin." (e) The New Testament, of which the supper is a sacrament, hath no priests; we read only of priests after the order of Melchizedec, of Aaron and Baal; the mass-priests cannot be after the order of Melchizedec, for Christ alone is after that order, according to Heb. vii. neither, can they be after the order of Aaron, because that order hath been abolished. If they will be priests after the order of Baal, we will allow it, for they are exceedingly like those priests, who "called upon their idol, and cut themselves with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them," 1 Kings xviii. 26, 28. The New Testament doth not acknowledge either an altar, or proper sacrifices. Do we read of priests in the New Testament, they are not mass-priests, but believers in general, who "are made by Christ kings and priests unto God and his Father," Rev. i. 6. Do we read of any altar, Heb. xiii. 10, we do not however find many altars, which the Papists "have multiplied to sin," like idolatrous Ephraim, Hosea viii. 11, but only one altar, to wit, Christ. Do we find sacrifices mentioned in the New Testament, they are the only sacrifice of Christ, and the spiritual sacrifices of believers, which they offer up to God by Christ, the only altar. See Heb. xiii. 10, 15, 16. 1 Peter ii. 5. And (f) how can either the Lord's supper, or the Popish mass be a sacrifice for the pardon of sins, when nothing is destroyed nor consumed, as was required in a sacrifice of

atonement; let it not be said, that the substance of bread and wine is destroyed; for this is not true, as we have proved before: Let us admit, that the substance of bread and wine ceaseth, but then something greater and more substantial is substituted in the stead of them, to wit, the flesh and blood of Christ, and thus we will receive more of God, than we give him to make atonement, contrary to the nature of sacrifices of atonement: and then also the body of Christ, when offered to obtain forgiveness must be consumed; "Without shedding of blood there is no remission," saith Paul, Heb. ix. 22. How then can the mass, which is an unbloody sacrifice, procure forgiveness? (g) Add to this, that the sacrifice of the mass, being offered day by day, cannot procure forgiveness, any more than the legal sacrifices, which did not make atonement, because they were repeated. See Heb. x. 12, 13.

2. The second particular, in which the Lord's supper differs from the Popish mass is, that the supper teacheth us, "that we by the Holy Ghost are ingrafted into Christ, who according to his human nature, is now not on earth, but in heaven at the right hand of God his Father." Believers are ingrafted into Christ by the Spirit in the supper, because they eat and drink his flesh and blood, not in a bodily manner, but spiritually and sacramentally, as we have explained this doctrine upon the seventy-sixth question. And the Lord's supper directs us thus to Christ in heaven; for it is "in remembrance of him, and in order to show forth his death till he come," agreeably to 1 Cor. xi. 24—26. But the mass teacheth differently from this, asserting that "Christ is bodily present under the forms of bread and wine." How then can the Romanists find the mass in the Lord's supper? For we have proved at large on the former Lord's day, that Christ is not bodily present under the forms of bread and wine, and that this is inconsistent with the nature of the supper.

3. The third particular, in which the mass differs from the supper, according to the instructor is, "that the supper testifieth to us, that since Christ is in heaven, he must there be worshipped by us." For if the supper direct us to Christ, as hath been now proved, the hearts of the communicants must be lifted up, as they cried to them of old; we must then also "seek" in the supper, "the things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God," according to Col. iii. 1, that we may be blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," as the apostle speaks, Eph. i. 3. But the mass teacheth, contrary to the nature of the supper, that "Christ must be worshipped under the forms of bread and wine:" and therefore the mass is false, yea, altogether a mistake;

for although we should seek the mass in the supper, we should not find it, but should miss it.

These things being all duly considered, we must conclude that "the mass is at bottom nothing else, than

1 A denial of the one sacrifice and sufferings of Jesus Christ." For Christ hath by his one sacrifice purchased perfect forgiveness of sins, as we have shown before; that sacrifice was indeed of infinite value, being "God's own blood," Acts xx. 28. "The blood of the Son of God, which cleanseth us from all sins," 1 John i. 7, which "brings in an everlasting righteousness and redemption," Dan. ix. 24. Heb. ix. 12. When we now say, that forgiveness is obtained by the sacrifice of the mass, and not by the sacrifice and sufferings of Christ on the cross, unless he be still daily offered up in the mass, do we not then deny that there is a perfect forgiveness of sins by the one sacrifice of Christ, and thus his sacrifice itself? The sacrifices of the Old Testament were shadows of the one sacrifice of Christ: therefore when we continue to offer sacrifices day by day, to obtain the pardon of sins, we deny the body of the shadows, the one sacrifice of Christ.

The Papists cry out against this, and say, that the sacrifice of the mass is a sacrifice of application, and consequently no denial of Christ's sacrifice on the cross; but then the sacrifice of Christ on the cross is not the same with the sacrifice of the mass, but altogether different from it: and so Christ, who was offered on the cross, is not offered in the mass. The sacrifice of the mass cannot apply the sacrifice of Christ; for a sacrifice is offered to God, but the application is made to men. If the sacrifice of Christ must be applied by another sacrifice, then his death, in which he was offered as a sacrifice, must be applied by another death. The sacrifice of Christ is applied by his exaltation, agreeably to Rom iv. 25. v. 10. Acts v. 31, by his word and sacraments, Eph. v. 26. and by his Spirit. See 1 Cor. vi. 11.

2. "The mass is also at bottom an accursed idolatry:" for the Romanists (a) celebrate the mass, the chief ceremony of their religion, in honour of the saints, to obtain their intercession with God. To bestow the chief honour of religion upon the saints, who are but creatures, is surely an accursed idolatry. (b) They worship that which is not God, when we must worship God only, as Christ saith, Matt. iv. 10, for they worship bread. Is it not an accursed idolatry to worship bread as God? (c) They say indeed that it is not bread, after it hath been blessed, but God himself: yet the form of bread is not God, and they nevertheless require that men should worship

that form. It is surely an abominable idolatry to worship mere accidents, which have no subsistence. (d) Although it were granted to the church of Rome, that the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ, it is then only a made God; and when they worship that, they practise heathenish idolatry; for "the heathens served them which by nature are no Gods," as Paul speaks, Gal. iv. 8. (e) According to the opinion of the Popish priests themselves, the people must unavoidably commit shameful idolatry; for if the bread and wine should not be transubstantiated, which may happen a thousand times; to wit, when the priest hath not been properly baptized, nor properly authorized by another priest, who hath been properly baptized and properly authorized, and when he hath not a steadfast design to make flesh and blood of the bread and wine, then transubstantiation fails, the bread and wine are not changed. When now the people worship it, do they not then commit idolatry? The people indeed can never be certain on account of all the requisite conditions of transubstantiation, that the bread and wine are changed, and they can therefore never worship it in faith, and without sin; for "all that is not of faith is sin." (f) And how can the Papists be so displeased with us, when we call the mass an accursed idolatry? Is not all idolatry accursed of God? There hath never been a more detestable idolatry heard of than that which the Papists practise with the mass. Peruse every book, ancient and modern, and see whether ye can find a single instance, that men have worshipped that which they ate, and voided. And nevertheless the Romanists do this. Justly therefore may we say of them, what Paul saith of the heathens in the text "that what they sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God."

How dare these men to mutter and abuse the word of God so shamefully, that they dare also to defend this abomination, (a) with the example of Melchizedec, who "brought forth bread and wine," Gen. xiv 18 Did he then celebrate the mass? was the bread and wine then also flesh and blood? do we read that he offered bread and wine? no, but he brought bread and wine forth, not to offer them, but to refresh Abraham and his weary soldiers. (b) They think that they can find a cloak for their shame in the divine prediction, Mal. i. 11, "In every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering." But if we must understand this of a proper and bodily offering, how then will Daniel's prediction be fulfilled, that "the Messiah should cause the oblation to cease?" Dan. ix. 27. And therefore we must judge that Mal. i. 11, speaks of the spiritual sacrifices of believers, which are exhibited according

to the style of the Old Testament. See Psalm cxli. 2. 1 Peter ii. 5. (c) It is still more shameless that the Romanists attempt to defend themselves with the words of the Saviour, when he saith "do this;" but doth he say "offer this?" is doing of every kind offering? surely no: but the Lord said do this, when he gave those who sat at meat with him bread and wine, to eat and drink, and therefore do this, is eat and drink this "in remembrance of me." (d) Can we indeed forbear to ridicule the Romanists, when they attempt to establish their mass by citing Acts xiii. 2, "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted?" How can they be so void of understanding? must we, where it is said, minister to the Lord, read minister to the mass? what a fantastical bible shall we have, if we proceed thus! Forsooth, the church of Rome hath power to say, this is the sense of that passage, and we may not gainsay her. Is this wonderful? she can change bread into a god; why then should she not be able to change the sense of the scripture also? She is indeed eminently skilful in this art, and hath rendered the passage, Acts xiii. 2, in a French translation, "They ministered to the mass." Is not this masterly? (e) But they say, the ancient fathers called the supper a sacrifice. We do not deny it: but is it therefore a sacrifice? must the ancients be heard, where the word of God is silent? But how dare these men appeal to the ancients, when they know that transubstantiation is a late invention, as we have shown on the foregoing Lord's day? The ancients having no knowledge of this new heresy, and not thinking that men would contrive such a transubstantiation and mass, called the supper, without any suspicion, a sacrifice by a sacramental phraseology, because it is a sign and seal of Christ's sacrifice; and perhaps also, because believers brought their gifts as sacrificial gifts, to be used in the supper, and likewise because they solemnly engaged there to offer themselves up unto God, in order to serve him.

II. But for whom was the Lord's supper instituted? for the living and the dead, that it might be offered up for them, in order to procure the pardon of their sins, as the Papists assert? By no means; none but the living can use it, and it was instituted for them; not for children, who cannot discern the body of the Lord, but for adults; yet this seal of the covenant is not for those, who live only a bodily life, but for those who have a spiritual life also; for it is a spiritual food, which none but those who are spiritually alive can receive: "Christ hath ordained this meat only for the faithful," saith our form for the supper. The supper is a seal of the righteousness of faith: we must therefore be partakers of that righteousness, if we

shall take the seal of it to ourselves: but must we have an assurance that we are in a state of grace, and possess that righteosness of faith, in order that we may have a right to this feast? and must a person who is not so assured, abstain from this sacrament? certainly no. It would be good to possess assurance upon indisputable grounds; we could then receive the supper with more faith, and to greater advantage; but those who do not possess assurance can also have a right; for a person may be a believer, and yet not be fully and clearly conscious that he is There are among the people of God, those who are new beginners, and such as are further advanced; there are weak and strong men; one while "God makes their mountain to stand strong," so that they can say, "I shall never be moved;" but anon "he hides his face again, and they are troubled." Psalm xxx. 6, 7. "They who go down to the dust, and they who cannot keep their souls alive," as well as they who are fat on the earth, "have the promise," that they shall eat," Psalm xxii. 29 Not only "the old" but also "the young" are invited "to flow together to the goodness of the Lord," Jer. xxxi. 12, 13. The supper is designed to strengthen the weak faith of the little ones also That none may nevertheless flatter himself, and draw near in a careless manner, thinking, I may be a believer, although I be not assured, and thus indulge himself in his security, when if he would consider his ways, he might easily know that he hath no interest in the righteousness of Christ, and that a true believer may not remain in uncertainty whether he have, or have not a lawful right to this seal of the covenant, the instructor exhibits in the eighty-first question, certain marks for trial, both for those who are qualified to approach the table of the Lord, and for those who must abstain from it.

The supper of the Lord was instituted then,

1. "For those who are truly sorrowful for their sins." Coming to themselves, they see their great guilt, and loathsome sinfulness, which affects them with grief, concern, shame, detestation of themselves, and anxiety: thus "they repent of their wickedness, saying, What have I done," Jer. viii. 6. See this in Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19. This is that "sincere sorrow," of which we must speak with the instructor, on the eighty ninth question. The supper was instituted for such, since it teacheth them their abominableness. by which they deserve death, as they see in it that "they have pierced" the Son of God, according to Zech. xii. 10. It is given them from the covenant of grace, of which the supper is a seal, to "remember their evil ways, and their doings that were not good, and thus to loathe themselves in their own sight for their iniquities and for their

abominations," according to the promise of the Lord, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. Yea, this humiliation qualifies them for and renders them capable of the grace which is sealed in the supper; for "the poor in spirit, and they who mourn are pronounced blessed," Matt. v. 3, 4. The Lord promiseth to "look upon" such in his kindness, Isaiah lvii. 15, 18. lxvi. 2.

2. This sorrow for sin is of itself not sufficient, it doth not of itself make any person better, nor worthy in the sight of the Lord. Adam, Cain and Judas had great sorrow, but it drove them to despair, and from the Lord; there must then be also "a trust, that our sins are forgiven for the sake of Christ; and that our remaining infirmities are covered by his passion and death." This trust is saving faith. We have explained largely enough on the seventh Lord's day in what manner we trust in this saving faith, that our sins are pardoned for the sake of Christ. The lowest degree of faith, that active and restless desire after Christ, and after the forgiveness of sins, and so a trust that we shall be justified, can give us a right to the supper, since those who hunger and thirst are invited to the benefits of Christ, and have the promise, that they shall be filled, Isaiah lv. 1. Mat. v. 9. Luke i. 53. That the instructor doth not require here the highest degree of trust appears from his speaking also of weak believers, "who earnestly desire to have their faith more and more strengthened." It is the nature of the spiritual life, that it inclines to grow. It is the cry of the weak, "Lord I believe; help thou mine unbelief," Mark ix. 24. "Increase our faith," Luke xvii. 5. And such have a right to this rich feast, because it is a feast, which strengthens their faith, according to what we have taught on the twenty fifth Lord's day; yet a person, who hath a full trust and faith, that all his sins are forgiven for the sake of Christ's sufferings, is qualified to partake of the supper to greater advantage, inasmuch as he is able to draw near, as one who is entitled, with more confidence, hath more power to discern the body of the Lord, and to receive the signs, as seals of the forgiveness of his sins.

3. That it may nevertheless appear, that this trust is not a vain imagination, the instructor requireth also "a desire to live a more holy life." Believers when they attend to themselves, see with displeasure their continual backslidings, and therefore their souls are restlessly desirous to amend their lives, yea, even to be perfect; for although believers know that they cannot be altogether perfect in this life, nevertheless, since they are conscious, that they can be more perfect, than they are, therefore they "follow after perfection, and reach after it, that they may apprehend it," with Paul, Philip.

iii. 12, 14. This desire is necessary in order to draw near the table, because we shall otherwise "partake of the Lord's table, and the table of devils," which, according to the text may not be done; we may not draw near to God any other way, much less in such a solemn manner. See Isaiah i. 12—15. By making use of the seal of the covenant we declare not only that the Lord is our God, but also that we are his people, "who must keep all his commandments," Deut. xxvi. 17, 18. Yea the sacraments are means to promote sanctification, Eph. v. 26, and the signs oblige us to "show forth the death of the Lord till he come." 1 Cor. xi. 26, which we cannot do, unless we amend our lives.

The Lord's supper being instituted for such only, those surely have no right to it, who do not possess these qualifications, to wit, all hypocrites, or dissemblers, who appear better than they are in themselves and in private: they will display a form of godliness by a fair profession, conversing with the godly, and making a great boasting and ado concerning their delight in holiness, but they deny the power of it in private; they crave no more than the name, that they are godly persons, and they aim only at promoting their own interest; but when they are examined, and cannot retain the name any longer, nor gain aught by walking in the narrow way, they will then forsake their religious course, yea, they will even oppose godliness and the godly. But these are not the only persons, who must abstain from the Lord's supper, but "all those likewise, who do not turn to God with sincere hearts," as all ignorant persons, all who cleave to any sin wilfully and wittingly and do not strive against it: those also who do not pursue more than a civil honesty, and an outward devotion, or who do indeed something more than others, that they may depend on what they do, but have never yet had a discovery of their sins, do not seek their salvation in Christ with an anxious concern, and do not pursue a faith, that worketh by love.

It is true, many venture to mingle with the guests at the table without a wedding garment; but like a lawless whore, they wrest the marriage pledge out of the hand of the bridegroom Christ: they cannot receive the supper aright, nor discern the body of the Lord, and "to those defiled and unbelieving persons nothing is pure, but both their mind and conscience is defiled," Titus i. 15. "To the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do, to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?" Psalm l. 16. "They eat and drink judgment to themselves," saith Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 29. They aggravate their condemnation, yea, God inflicts sickness and death upon them; he did thus to the Corinthians, 1 Cor.

xi. 30. Is this matter of wonder? when they receive the supp unworthily, they render themselves "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord," as the apostle saith, 1 Cor. x. 17. "They crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame," according to Heb. vi. 6. Surely not because they pollute and profane the flesh and blood of Christ with their mouths, as the Papists and Lutherans imagine on account of transubstantiation and consubstantiation, which we have confuted before; but because, when they suffer the kindness and love of Christ in his sufferings to be sealed to them, they declare that he is a companion of wicked men, and was justly punished as an evil doer.

III. But may those, to whom the oversight of the church is intrusted, admit persons, who do not possess the abovementioned qualifications in truth? no, they must prohibit them. But how will any man be infallibly certain, that another possesses truth in the inward parts? This is not given to any man; the Lord reserves it to himself. Perhaps it will be said, the person who is admitted, must exhibit a certain evidence, that he hath truly experienced an inward change? But what shall that evidence be? that he can show the time of his new birth? I conceive this to be impossible, because, he doth not know the moment, when he became alive from the dead; he can indeed say when he was convinced, but that is not always spiritual life; or shall his evidence be, that he speaks of spiritual things in a spiritual manner, and heartily from experience, that he holds with the most excellent of the pious, and that he walks in every respect unblamably before all men? Who of the most exact and most scrupulous dealers with souls in matters of this nature hath not often found himself deceived here? and hath he not sometimes suspected persons, who had not either the ability, or the confidence to make themselves known, yea, who despised themselves? one hath more of the gift of discerning spirits than another: my colleagues will reject a person, whom I receive, and they will receive one whom I reject. If then such manifest evidences be the proper rules, according to which the overseers of the church must admit a person to the Lord's supper, or exclude him, there must then necessarily arise strife, discord, confusion and every evil work, Christ must be divided, and his coat, which is without seam, must be rent.

Shall we then admit every person without distinction? is there no certain standard, according to which the overseers of the church must proceed in this matter? God forbid. We think that an overseer of the church, in order to administer the Lord's supper to a person without scruple, and without being perplexed and embarrass-

ed with many anxious thoughts, ought only to inquire whether the communicant make a proper confession of his sins, of his faith in Christ, and of his purpose to amend his life, and whether his conversation be agreeable to his confession: "But those, who by their confession and life declare themselves to be infidels and ungodly, must not be admitted to this supper." Whether they do in their confession err from the fundamental doctrines of the faith, or whether their conversation be scandalous and offensive; for if we admit such, "the covenant of God will be profaned," because we then suffer the seals of the covenant, and so the covenant of God, to be profaned. Yea, then "the wrath of God will be kindled against the whole congregation." It fared thus with the Corinthians, who conducted in a most slovenly manner with respect to the supper, when many of them were punished with weakness, sickness, and the sleep of death, 1 Cor. xi. 17—34. "And therefore it is the duty af the Christian church, according to the appointment of Christ and of his apostles, to exclude such persons by the keys of the kingdom of heaven, till they show amendment of life." But of this we must speak on the next Lord's day.

APPLICATION.

It will be necessary to impress what hath been said on our minds, in order that we may improve it, and particularly in the first place with respect to the Popish mass, and then with respect to the right partakers of the supper. When ye, hearers, consider what hath been said concerning the mass, must ye not then,

1. Justify our separation from the church of Rome? had not our fathers sufficient reasons for departing out of Babylon? they perceived indeed that the mass was a mystery of iniquity. How could they remain with a people, who would compel them, even by the most intolerable tortures, to deny the only sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and thus the only ground of our salvation, and to practise the most accursed idolatry? And though it were even so, that the Papists would have permitted our fathers to disapprove of this abomination, and to maintain a different opinion in their own minds, might they then have continued in that synagogue of Satan? "Could they drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils? could they be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils?" as the text speaks.

When the Lord by the power of his Spirit, and the marvellous enlightening of his truth, caused them to hear from Rev. xviii. 4, the "voice, saying, Come out of Babylon, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues," could they then yet remain in her? And verily we did not separate from her wantonly, nor too hastily; for "we would have healed Babylon, but we could not heal her," and therefore we "forsook" her, according to Jer. li. 9. "God's two witnesses prophesied a thousand, two hundred and threescore days: but the beast, which came up out of the bottomless pit, slew them in all the martyrs: but God put in the reformation of the church, "a spirit of life into them, so that they stand upon their feet," in order to bear a constant testimony against the beast, and "they have ascended up to heaven in the presence of their enemies," being exalted above their enemies, by a heavenly state of the church. See this foretold, Rev. xi. Who must not praise the Lord that he hath broken our yoke, and bursten our bonds; that he hath brought forth the truth and light out of darkness; yea, without extraordinary grace, this would have been impossible.

I often wonder how our reformers, who were from their birth educated in the church of Rome, were presently able to exhibit the truth in all its lustre, and were endued with so much valour, that they could withstand and weaken the great power of the Romish beast. How ought we, with "the four and twenty elders, to fall down upon our faces, to worship God, and say, We thank thee, O Lord God Almighty, which art and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned?" Surely we ought all of us to beware of returning to that people, or of exercising communion with them, which is not unavoidable, either in the dedication of their churches, thronged with professed knaves, and those who esteem the world above all besides; or by going to see that abominable massworship; or by contracting marriages with the menservants, or womenservants of Baal; or by taking servants of them; "Flee from idolatry," saith Paul, vrs. 15, preceding our text. Yea, the magistrates ought to bestir themselves to banish that abom nation out of their jurisdictions: persecution, and a forcing of conscience ought never to be commended; but we might discountenance the abomination of the mass, without rendering ourselves guilty of forcing conscience. We find that as soon as the godly kings had ascended the throne of David, they suppressed the worship of idols.

2. Esteem the sacrifice of Christ sufficient to procure the forgiveness of your sins, seek no other, rest in that, and be satisfied with it, as the mean to obtain the pardon of all your sins. It ought with Paul "to be far from you to glory, save in the cross of your Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto you, and ye unto the world," Gal. vi. 14. Ye ought not to seek pardon even in the signs of the supper, though they were instituted by the Lord, but to look through them to the Lord in heaven, and to his sacrifice, as he presents it to his Father in that true sanctuary; for "the bread and the wine are" the seals of "his body and blood shed for many, for the remission of sins," as the Saviour speaks, Matt. xxvi. 26—28. "Count therefore all things loss and dung, that ye may be found in him, not having your own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 8, 9.

3. Believers, demean yourselves as "a holy priesthood, offering up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," according to the admonition of Peter, 1 Peter ii. 5. The priesthood of the Popish communion is defiled, and their sacrifice is idolatrous; but ye have been made priests by Christ himself unto God his Father, Rev. i. 6. Therefore offer to the Lord incense and a pure offering," according to the prophecy, Mal. i. 11, not in a corporal, but in a spiritual manner, and indeed your "body," Rom. xii. 1, "a broken spirit," Psalm li. 17, "thanksgiving and welldoing," Heb. xiii. 15, 16, "prayer," Psalm cxli. 2. "Your life itself," if he should require it in martyrdom, for the confirmation of his truth, and for the glorification of his name. See this in Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 6.

We must not only improve the abomination of the mass to a good purpose, contrary to the nature of it, but also our doctrine concerning the proper partakers of the Lord's supper. It is dangerous to partake of the blessed supper of the Lord unworthily; for we render ourselves thereby guilty of a fearful sin, and we bring a dreadful judgment upon ourselves, as we have shown before. We have indeed said that the overseers of the church have a sufficient warrant to admit a person to this seal of the covenant, when they perceive that he hath made a proper confession, and that his conduct is agreeable to his confession; but this is not enough for the communicant himself, he must be a true believer, one who is truly sorrowful for his sins, who seeks his salvation and forgiveness with confidence in Christ only, and is intent upon holiness, and an amendment of his life, that he may he qualified to partake of this holy and blessed supper. Therefore we must attend to three things, with respect to re

ceiving the Lord's supper, in order that we may receive it properly. 1. Before. 2. In, and 3. After this supper.

1. It is certain, that when we undertake great things, we ought to prepare ourselves for them. When the Lord was about to come down to the people upon Sinai, he ordered "Moses to sanctify the people, that they might be ready against the third day," Exod. xix. 10, 11. See this also Gen. xxxv. 1—4. No man might come near the tabernacle or temple under the Old Testament, until he was sanctified. If Job should "stretch out his hands toward God, he must first prepare his heart," according to the counsel of Zophar, Job. xi. 13. Will any man go to an extraordinary feast without a decent preparation for it? How much more ought a person to prepare himself for this precious feast? and therefore (a) Examine yourselves whether ye have a right to the supper, and whether ye possess the qualifications which we have mentioned. "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves," saith Paul, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. This is necessary before the supper, therefore the same apostle saith, 1 Cor. xii. 28, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." See what we have said formerly concerning the requisite qualifications of a worthy communicant; and apply your souls to those things, that ye may see whether they be in you.

(b) Consider your former backslidings, since the last supper, that ye may humble yourselves for them, may be induced to flee to the sufferings and death of the Mediator for reconciliation, and may yet confide, notwithstanding your deficiencies; in this manner are we qualified and rendered capable of meeting God in the Lord's supper. "A broken and contrite heart God will not despise," Psalm li. 17. See also Isaiah lvii. 15. Matt. v. 4.

(c) Renew your assent to the covenant of God, that ye may receive the seal of the covenant without scruple. Hezekiah required that the Israelites should "yield themselves to the Lord" before the passover, and so "enter into his sanctuary," 2 Chron. xxx. 8. Do this also before the supper, which hath succeeded to the passover.

(d) Stir up your desires for needful and for many graces: all the grace which was merited for you by the sufferings of Christ, is represented and sealed in the supper; the Lord himself calls to you from Psalm lxxxi. 10. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." But before ye approach,

(e) Be reconciled to your brother, if ye have injured him, or if he have injured you; this is required by the Saviour, Matt. v. 23, 24. When they were about to draw near the table in the ancient church,

the deacon cried aloud, "Embrace and kiss one another." Who can expect forgiveness and favour of the Lord, if he will not first forgive his brother?

2. But we must not only order ourselves thus before the administration of the supper, but we must also demean ourselves properly, while it is administered, and while we are receiving it: and therefore,

(a) Endeavour to detach your hearts from all that is visible and sinful, and to empty them of it, that ye may employ yourselves only with the Lord, and his institution. Abraham's servants were obliged to abide with the ass at the foot of the mountain, when he and his son went up to the Lord, Gen. xxii 5.

(b) Arise and draw near, as those who have a right and are called This would enable you to approach with boldness and faith, in expectation of favour. When the Lord Jesus called Bartimeus, the multitude said to him, "Be of good comfort, rise, he calleth thee;" and when he came in this manner, to Jesus, he obtained his request, Mark x. 46—52. We draw near indeed seriously enough, but not believingly enough, when with Esther we only venture, and say, "I will go in unto the king, which is not according to the law, and if I perish, I perish," Esther iv. 16.

(c) See in the signs the painfulness, and the power of Christ's death for you, and his ardent love to you, that ye may "look at him whom ye have pierced," as was foretold, Zech xii. 10.

(d) Take and receive the signs of the minister, as from the hand of the Lord, to be a pledge and seal of his truth and love manifested in his sufferings for you. See, for we hasten to conclude, Rom. iv. 11. 1 Cor. iv. 1.

3. But shall we now "return, like the dog to his vomit, and, like the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire?" no! but we must endeavour also to make a suitable improvement of the supper, after we have received it; and to this belongs,

(a) That we beware of carelessness, recklessness, and sins that lightly beset us, and that we remain near the Lord, that we "may not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom we are sealed," Eph. iv. 30. We should, with the spouse, "adjure all things, that they stir not up, nor awake our love," Song ii. 7. Yea, with her we ought to be "a garden inclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed," Song iv. 16.

(b) Reflect much on what hath been done to you: Jesus asked his apostles, after washing their feet, John xiii. 12. "Know ye

what I have done to you?" In like manner should we also ask ourselves after the supper, that we might retain a relish of it.

(c) Live and feed now upon the sealed covenant, and the benefits of it. The Lord hath engaged to give you out of the fulness of Christ grace for grace; claim it of him, and urge your request by his sealed "word, upon which he hath caused you to hope," with David, Psalm cxix. 49.

(d) Live now like persons who are sealed, and engaged to the Lord, "showing forth his death until he come," according to 1 Cor. xi. 26, and laying yourselves wholly out for him. Let "the love of Christ constrain you to judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they who live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again," 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

Suffer me to say also, relative to your improvement of the supper, for your direction, (a) that ye must not think, that we ought, about the time of the supper, to pursue another kind of holiness, than at other times. Many fatigue themselves, about the time of the supper, in a legal manner, to practise another kind of holiness: yea, they will reject a good frame of assurance and delight in the Lord, in order to obtain a contrite frame, and to indulge in excessive sorrow. But we must always practise the same kind of holiness; and we ought only at certain seasons, and particularly about the time of the supper, to excite ourselves to special liveliness.

(b) The soul often knows not how to examine, and to order herself, yea, sometimes, when she attempts it, she becomes darker and more confused than before; but we undertake this work "with might and with power," when we ought "with the Spirit of the Lord," Zech. iv. 6. Therefore look back with attention upon your former condition, see what ye think of yourselves, and how ye are disposed at this moment, and ye will thus become acquainted with your own minds, and attain to clearness; or read a good book, which treats of these matters; or apply to a good man, speak to him of your condition, and seek relief of him.

(c) Attend not too scrupulously to the order and the number of the particulars, which we have proposed for your improvement, lest it should perplex and weary you; we give you only a clue, that ye may see what is most agreeable to your frame.

(d) Do not make your good frame your ground of confidence; for although a good frame qualifies you for the supper, nevertheless the sufferings of Christ, his institution, and his invitation to you are the only grounds of confidence, upon which ye may draw nigh.

(e) Do not therefore forbear to draw nigh on account of a sight of your unworthiness, or a want of preparation; a sight of this, when it humbles you, is a proper frame to draw nigh with. Pray for yourselves, as Hezekiah prayed for the people, 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19, 20.

(f) When ye have sinned after the supper, do not then think that the covenant and seal of God are now become of no effect to you. No, that covenant and seal are everlasting; and therefore recover and bestir yourselves in consequence of it, to obtain new grace and pardon of your covenant God. See Isaiah liv. 9, 10.

(g) Although the church should be ever so corrupt, yea, though even wicked men should be received into the house of God, and admitted to his supper do not therefore separate yourselves from it; for ye have contributed to corrupt it. Doth it offend you, that the overseers of the church admit those whom ye consider as ungodly, others have reason to be offended with you also, because ye do not first speak to those persons, and accuse them to the church, which is your duty according to Matt. xviii. 15, 16, 17. 1 Cor. i. 11. And thus the wrath of God will not be kindled against you, since ye do your duty. Do ye not advance by doing your duty, mourn then, yet do not forsake the church, which is still less profitable Separating from a church, in which there is still truth and godliness, is also evil, and provokes God to anger. See this Prov. xxiv. 21. Jude vrs. 19. The church of Corinth was exceedingly corrupt, yet Paul condemns separating from it, 1 Cor. xi. 17—30. Though our church in the Netherlands is sufficiently corrupt, she is nevertheless not so corrupt, but that Christ walks still in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; there are those still "whom the Lord knows and seals as his own," according to 2 Tim. ii. 19. "He will himself at length take away by his angels the wicked, as the tares, and cause the righteous to shine as the sun in his kingdom." Amen.

THE

KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

XXXI. LORD'S DAY.

Matt. xvi. 19. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoevor thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.

Q. 83. *What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven?*

A. The preaching of the holy gospel, and Christian discipline, or excommunication out of the Christian church; by these two the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers, and shut against unbelievers.

Q. 84. *How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the preaching of the holy gospel?*

A. Thus; when according to the command of Christ, it is declared and publicly testified to all and every believer, that whenever they receive the promise of the gospel by a true faith, all their sins are really forgiven them of God, for the sake of Christ's merits: and on the contrary, when it is declared and testified to all unbelievers, and such as do not sincerely repent, that they stand exposed to the wrath of God, and eternal condemnation, so long as they are unconverted: according to which testimony of the gospel, God will judge them, both in this, and the life to come.

Q. 85. *How is the kingdom of heaven shut and opened by Christian discipline?*

A. Thus; When according to the command of Christ, those who under the name of Christians maintain doctrines or practices inconsistent therewith, will not after having been often brotherly admonished, renounce their errours and wicked course of life, are complained of to the church, or to those who are thereunto appointed by the church: and if they despise their admonition, are by them forbid the use of the sacraments; whereby they are excluded from the Christian church, and by God himself from the kingdom of Christ; and when they promise and show real amendment, are again received as members of Christ and his church.

WHEN the signs of the Lord's supper were about to be distributed in the primitive church, the deacon cried, "The holy things are for them who are holy." The holy are indeed the only proper persons to partake of that which is holy, and they only can use it in a holy manner, as it ought to be used, while the unholy profane whatsoever is holy: "Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled, and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled," saith Paul, Titus i. 15. No uncircumcised person, nor any who was unclean by a dead carcase, might eat of the holy passover under the Old Testament. No man had liberty to minister in holy things, until he was first sanctified for that purpose; yea, to the end that no unholy person might enter into the tabernacle or temple, door-keepers were appointed, who removed the unclean therefrom. The priests were appointed censors of uncleanness, to distinguish between persons and things that were clean and unclean, that nothing which was unclean might appear before the Lord. These things were enjoined indeed until the time of reformation, and are now abolished; but the Lord doth not therefore choose that things, which are more essentially holy, should be administered to the unholy: no, they may be dispensed only to the holy, and they must be withholden from the unholy: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again, and rend you," saith the Saviour to the apostles, Matt. vii. 6. He hath therefore given to his ministers the power of the keys, that they may admit none but the holy into his kingdom, and may shut out the unholy, according to our text. The instructor, having taught in the foregoing Lord's day, that the holy supper was instituted only

for the holy, showeth also that the church must shut out by the keys of the kingdom of heaven those who give public evidence of their unholiness. The instructor having proposed this in general, explains it at large in this Lord's day by two particulars; he shows,

I. What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven, Q. 83.

II. How they must be used, Q. 84, 85.

1. By the kingdom of heaven the scripture understands often, and thus also in the text, the church of the Lord, of which he speaks in the 18th verse; for Jesus Christ, the King, is the Lord from heaven, who hath made that Jerusalem his throne, to which his heavenly subjects, the believers, the saints of the high places, have access, to obtain there by their heavenly prayers, the heavenly benefits of righteousness, peace and joy, through the Holy Ghost, of the heavenly King, in order to serve him according to his heavenly laws, and by means of this kingdom to inherit a still higher kingdom of heaven.

This heavenly kingdom is shut against the sinner: the Lord sent him out of Paradise in his father Adam; but when the Lord God erects this kingdom on earth for his Son, he opens an access to it for the elect sinner, that his Son may have the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. He hath therefore given to the ministers of his kingdom the keys of that kingdom; they are certainly not material, but, according to the nature of the church, heavenly keys, a heavenly and ecclesiastical power to rule the church, to open it to the penitent, and to shut it against the impenitent; as in the affairs of a house, when we intrust the management of a house to a person, we deliver to him for that end the keys of the house, that he may admit into it all those who belong to it, and may open all the hidden treasures of it, and that he may shut all strangers out of it, and lock up all the goods of it. Thus also the power to govern the state is expressed by keys; when the Lord appointed "Eliakim treasurer and steward of the palace, committing the government into his hands," he said, "I will lay the key of the house of David upon his shoulder: he shall open, and none shall shut, and he shall shut, and none shall open," Isaiah xxii. 15, 20—22. Therefore the keys of the kingdom of heaven are the power to govern that kingdom, even the church. This power is either the supreme power, which the Father hath given to his Son alone: for "God hath put all things under his feet, and hath given him to be the head over all things to the church," according to Eph. i. 22. "He hath the keys of hell and of death," and "he hath," more than Eliakim, "the key of David: for he opens, and no man

shuts, and he shuts and no man opens," Rev. i. 18. iii. 7. or a power subordinate to him, and ministerial, which his ministers receive of him, agreeably to what he saith in the text.

The Remonstrants deny that the church hath such a power, distinct from the civil power; for seeing that the church would not suffer them, on account of their doctrine, they sought their help in the gates, and in order to flatter the magistrates, they surrendered the power of the church to them, and said that all the power of the church depended upon the higher powers, that the rules of the church ought to be enacted by the magistrates or in virtue of their authority over her, and that they ought therefore also to appoint and depose the ministers of the church; but the reformed church opposed this doctrine, and said that the church possessed such a ministerial power, distinct from the power of the magistrates, to govern herself, to elect her ministers and rulers according to the word of God, and when they conducted themselves amiss in doctrine or life, to reject them.

That the church possesses such a power, distinct from the civil power of the magistrates, appears (a) from the text, in which Christ, as king of Zion, commits the power of the keys, not to the magistrates, but to his apostles only. (b) Under the Old Testament the power of the church was distinct from the civil power: "Amariah the chief priest was ruler in all the matters of the Lord; and Zebadiah in all the matters of the king," 2 Chron. xix. 8, 11. When Uzziah undertook to perform the work of a priest, he incurred the displeasure of the Lord, 2. Chron. xxvi. 16—21. It is true, the godly kings exercised sometimes a considerable jurisdiction in the affairs of the church, but many of them were also prophets, and thus also ecclesiastical persons, who had an extraordinary revelation for this purpose: moreover, those kings did not take upon themselves that jurisdiction in the affairs of the church, except in times of uncommon declension, in order to reform the church, which is now still the duty of the magistrates: but it doth not follow therefrom, that the magistrates have a sovereign power over the church, any more than it follows, that ecclesiastical persons have a sovereign power over the state, because Jehoiada in his time reformed, and restored the state, 2 Chron. xi. and because priests also sat in the great Sanhedrim, which judged in all legal and capital cases. (c) Paul teacheth us still more clearly the power of the church when he saith, 2 Cor. x. 8, "Though I should boast somewhat more of our power, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed." The church hath then a power,

not from the magistrates, but from the Lord. The same apostle saith that "he should use sharpness according to that power," 2 Cor. xiii. 10. (d) The Lord himself hath ordained certain officers in his church, which therefore intimateth a power to govern the church, as of "ministers and stewards" 1 Cor. iv. 1, "governments," 1 Cor. xii. 28, "ambassadours" 2 Cor. v. 20, "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers," Eph. iv. 11. "overseers," 1 Thess. v. 14. "rulers, watchmen," Heb. xiii. 17, "bishops, stewards of God," Tit. i. 7. (e) Doth not even the nature of the case teach this? the power of the magistrates relates only to the kingdom of nature, but the power of the church relates to the kingdom of grace, the power of the magistrates extends only to the bodily condition of the citizens; but that of the church to the spiritual condition of her members; the power of the magistrates is a lordly power, but that of the church is a ministerial power, nor under the magistrates, but under Christ, 1 Cor. iv. 1. The office of the magistrate can be administered by a heathen, but no ecclesiastical office can be so administered.

It is of no avail to say that all magistrates have not a power over the church, but only the Christian magistrates; for Christianity belongs not to the nature of the magistracy, since otherwise no heathen could administer that office, contrary to Rom. xiii. 1—6.

Moreover, the power and government of the church doth not effect a kingdom within a kingdom, the power of the church subverting that of the magistrate; for then family government, which is distinct from civil government, would also be contrary to the government of the magistrates.

But they say, "kings are," according to Isaiah xlix. 23, "nursing fathers, and their queens nursing mothers of the church." Have they therefore any Lordship over the church? if so, then the wives of the magistrates have also such an authority. Is nursing the church, exercising authority over her? the passage alledged doth not surely assert this, but only that the great men of the world should be favourable to the church, not by exercising authority over her, but by submitting themselves willingly to her. The original hath not lords, but only nurses, and it is added, "They shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet." This hath but little resemblance to power, authority, and lordship over the church.

We do not however agree with the Papists, who have introduced a lordly power into the church, not only in ecclesiastical, but also in civil matters, in an antichristian manner; yea, they do not allow

the magistrates any power at all relative to the church; for although the magistrates have no power in the church, they have nevertheless a power relative to the church. Ecclesiastical persons are subject, as citizens, to the magistrates: the magistrates may punish ecclesiastical persons on account of any civil misdemeanour, as Solomon expelled Abiathar on account of his conspiracy with Adonijah, 1 Kings ii. 35. Magistrates may also manage the temporal possessions of the church, inquire whether the true doctrine be preached, root out errours, enact the rules of the church into laws, and they are bound to cherish the church. according to Isaiah xlix. 23.

Neither doth this ecclesiastical power reside with the pope of Rome, as the head of the church; for he is not the head, as we have proved from the word of God, on the twenty-first Lord's day. When Christ saith in the text to Peter, "I will give thee the keys," &c. this surely doth not relate to the pope; for since he doth neither profess the doctrine, nor live the life of Peter, he cannot be the successor of Peter. What Christ saith here to Peter, he saith likewise to all the apostles. See John xx. 21, 22, 23. When Christ asked all his apostles whom they said that he was, Peter answered in the name of them all, and so Christ also speaks these words to Peter, as representing them all. See vrs. 13—15.

Moreover, this ecclesiastical power doth not reside with every member of the church, as the Brownists imagine; for when all the people govern, there will arise confusion: but the Lord requireth, that "all things should be done," in his church, "decently and in order," 1 Cor. xiv. 40. "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers?" may we ask here with Paul, 1 Cor. xii. 29. Much less doth this power reside with the women, as certain enthusiasts and Antinomians fancy; for women are forbidden to speak in the church, 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35. 1 Tim. ii. 12, but the ecclesiastical power resides with the rulers of the church; these are not bishops, on whom the other rulers and ministers of the church depend; for the name bishop, in Greek *episcopos*, doth not intimate any sovereignty, but signifies only an overseer, and is given to all the ministers without distinction, and even to the elders, as we may see, Acts xx. 17, 28. Phil. i. 1. Titus i. 5—7, and besides this, all manner of sovereignty is forbidden in the church. See Mat. xx. 20—27. 1 Peter v. 1—4. But the rulers of the church are either extraordinary, as the apostles and evangelists, who were called and qualified in an extraordinary manner by the Lord Jesus himself, to preach the gospel in all languages to every nation, and to confirm it by miracles, Mat. x. 14. The evangelists were teachers sent into different parts by the apos-

tles to preach the gospel, and to confirm the churches, which the apostles had gathered. We read of them, Eph. iv. 11. Such an one was Philip, Acts xxi. 8. Timothy, 2 Tim. iv. 5, and Titus, ch. i. 5. Or the rulers of the church are ordinary, who are called elders: these are distinguished into elders, who teach and rule, and elders who do not teach, but rule: "Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine," saith Paul, 1 Tim. v. 17. The elders who teach are called also "teachers," and those who only rule, are called "governments," 1 Cor. xii. 28. and considered collectively, they are called "the presbytery," or eldership, 1 Tim. iv. 14. To these rulers, the Lord Jesus, as the great prophet and King of his church, hath committed the power of the keys, as appears not only from the beforementioned offices, see 1 Cor. iv. 1, Eph. iv. 11, 12, but also from Mat. xviii. 17, where the rulers, as representing the whole church, are called the church, and receive the power to cast an incorrigible sinner out of the church; and the rulers, when assembled for this purpose, are either consistories, classes, or synods. Synods are gathered from the churches of a province, or of a whole country, or from all the known churches in the world; and are therefore called provincial, national, and universal synods. Although all lordship is forbidden in the church, nevertheless, that all things may be done decently and in order, consistories must be subordinate and subject to classes, classes to synods, provincial synods to national, and national to universal. This is gainsaid by the Independents, who will have that each church should be governed according to its own particular laws, and be independent on other churches, because otherwise lording will be introduced into the church. On the contrary the apostle saith, that "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets: for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints." See 1 Cor. xiv. 29—33. For what purpose was the synod of Jerusalem assembled? was it not in order to decide the great controversy, that had arisen in the churches, whether the Gentiles ought to be circumcised, in order to their salvation? and when it was decreed, that it was not necessary to circumcise them, was not that decree sent to all the churches? and did they not submit to it? would such a submission introduce lording into the church? Nothing is better calculated to prevent it and to preserve soundness of doctrine.

II. The rulers of the church make use of these keys with respect to all that belongs to the church, as the ecclesiastical assemblies, the rules of the church according to which the outward order of the church must be regulated, the constituting of forms of union, the

decision of controversies; but all things must be done according to the word of God, and nothing contrary to it: but, that we may abide by the instructor, this ecclesiastical power must be exercised especially "in the preaching of the holy gospel, and in Christian discipline, as two keys by which the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers, and shut against unbelievers."

The first key, to wit, the power to preach the gospel, is not given to all, who possess an excellent knowledge of the doctrine of truth, which is according to godliness; but only to those, who are lawfully called thereto, and sent. "How shall they preach, except they be sent? saith Paul, Rom. x. 15. See also Jer. xiv. 14, 15. xxiii. 21, 32. 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. Heb. v. 4, 5, 6. And although no man is sent now in such an extraordinary manner, as the apostles and evangelists were, nevertheless we must look upon a person as sent by God, when he is chosen to such an office by the church, either unanimously, or by a plurality of votes, or by lot; for this was usual even in the days of the apostles, and deemed proper and divine. See Acts i. 21—26. xiv. 23. xx. 28. 1 Tim. iv. 14. Moreover, it belongs not to all the elders to preach the gospel, but only to those who labour in the word and doctrine," 1 Tim. v. 17. The ruling elders have only a right to take care that the preachers make use of this key rightly, and according to the word of God See Acts xx. 28. 29. 30.

The sinner is debarred by sin from access to the kingdom of heaven, and from all the great privileges of it: yea, "his own iniquities take the sinner himself, and he is holden with the cords of his sins." according to Prov. v. 22. "He is taken captive in the snare of the devil at his will," 2 Tim. ii. 26. He is "kept under the law, and shut up under it," Gal. iii. 23. Even believers find their access barred up through the strength of their corruption, the weakness of their faith, and the hiding of the Lord's countenance; their doubts concerning their right to the benefits of the kingdom bind them fast time after time, See Job xiv. 23—28. xix. 6, 8. Psalm xxxi. 22. Lam. iii. 7, 8, 17, 18, 44. But the kingdom of heaven is opened to the sinner, and he is thus loosed, not by granting him the pardon of his sins, after he hath confessed them to a priest; for this doth not belong to men, but to God only, as we have shown largely enough on the twenty third Lord's day; but by the preaching of the gospel, by which he is not informed, that the gate of the kingdom is opened by the blood of Jesus Christ to every sinner, as the Remonstrants speak in their cavilling censures of this Lord's day; for this is contrary to the word of God, as we have shown on the seventh Lord's day; but the sinner is taught, that God hath set his Son forth

to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to which he is invited and called, that he may be excited and allured to embrace this Mediator, to go through him to the Father, and to be admitted into his kingdom. In this manner did Paul open the kingdom of heaven, when he said, 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadours for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." But the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers, and they are loosed by this key particularly, "by declaring and testifying to them that all their sins are really forgiven them of God for the sake of Christ's merits." To this end the God of his people saith to the ministers of the holy gospel, Isaiah xl. 1, 2. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned." This is "remitting sins," John xx. 23, and "preaching the forgiveness of sins in the name of Christ," Luke xxiv. 47. See Acts x. 43. To do this properly it is not enough merely to declare these promises in general, but we must apply them to believers in particular, and for this purpose point out to them marks of grace, that they may have a clear view of the truth of their faith, as the apostles often acted. See Rom. viii. 1, 9, 13. James ii. 14—26. 1 John iii. 14, iv. 13. This is done either "publicly" in the assembly of God's people, where the gospel is preached, as Paul did, Acts xiii. 38, 39, or privately, when we speak to a distressed believer in particular, or when he speaks to us, and we then apply these promises to him, speak comfortably to him, and remove his difficulties and scruples; thus Paul also acted, Acts xx. 20. But inasmuch as believers dare not always assure themselves by the word of reconciliation, and since they offend often, they must likewise often "lay hold on the promises of the gospel by a true faith," and the messengers of good tidings, must publish the message of reconciliation to them, by which their wavering souls will be brought to a steadfast assurance and they will thus obtain "boldness to enter with a true heart, in a full assurance of faith into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh," Heb. x. 19, 20, 22. It is true, every one who is capable can inform believers of this from the word of God, but not as an ambassadour in the name of Jesus, as the preachers of the gospel must do, 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. There is a great dif-

ference whether a common person announce to a capital offender, that he is pardoned, or whether his lord's messenger do it.

But the preachers are not only commanded "to say to the righteous, that it shall be well with him," but also to denounce "a wo against the wicked," and say "that it shall be ill with him," Isaiah iii. 10, 11. Therefore the instructor saith, that by the key of the preaching of the holy gospel "it is declared and testified to all unbelievers, and such as do not sincerely repent, that they stand exposed to the wrath of God, and eternal condemnation, so long as they are unconverted." This is also according to the word of God, which saith, "He who believeth not shall be damned," Mark xvi. 16, and "he who believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," John iii. 36. In this manner did Peter use this key against Simon the sorcerer, when he said to him, Acts vii. 21, 23, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God; for I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity" Which, that it may have the greater effect, is proclaimed to sinners with an "anathema," See 1 Cor. xvi. 22. By which those unbelievers and impenitent persons are shut out of the kingdom of God, are bound under their sins and the wrath of God, and their "sins thus retained," according to the text, and John xx. 23, which is done by the preaching of the holy gospel; not that the gospel doth this by itself, for the gospel contains no threatenings nor curses; it is "the law" only "that worketh wrath," as Paul speaks, Rom iv. 15. But as the law ministereth to the gospel, and must be preached with the gospel, therefore this outshutting is said to be performed by the preaching of the gospel.

Let no man think that this opening and shutting by the preaching of the gospel is a vain thing, and of no consequence, for we must receive this as the voice of God, and not simply as the voice of man; for God will judge by this testimony both in this life; "He confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messenger," as he saith himself, Isaiah xliv. 26. "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," saith the Saviour in the text. "Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained unto them," saith he, John xx. 23, and also in the life to come; therefore the apostle saith, Rom. ii. 16. "God will judge the secrets of men" in the day of judgment "by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."

But as this key first opens, and afterwards shuts, so there is also another key, which first shuts, and afterwards opens. This is the Christian discipline, or the shutting of a person out of the Christian church, which is not exercised on them who are without, but on them who are within the church," who bear the Christian name. "Ye shall not keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one ye shall not even eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? but them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person," saith the apostle, 1 Cor. v. 11, 12, 13. Further, this key is not used with respect to them, who are only baptized, and who do not declare and testify by partaking of the Lord's supper, that they abide by their baptism; for the first key is used with respect to these: but it is used with respect to those who are public members, who have joined themselves to the church by a confession of their faith, and declare by receiving the supper, that they are in union with the church: who nevertheless under the name of Christians maintain unchristian doctrines or practices." "A man that is an heretic, reject," saith Paul, Tit. iii. 10. See 2 John, vrs. 10, 11. Further, "we may not keep company with a brother, who leads an ungodly life," 1 Cor. v. 11. 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14.

This Christian discipline shuts such persons out of the Christian church, not by inflicting corporal punishment on them, as the Papists do, who bereave them in the most cruel manner of their goods, kingdom, civil rights, yea, of life itself. Not unlike this is the conduct of certain Mennonites, who separate persons for various trifling reasons from their bed and board, yea, from all intercourse with believers. This is an ecclesiastical, but an abominable tyranny, and a prodigious usurpation: it belongs only to the civil, and not to the ecclesiastical powers to inflict corporal punishments; "for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds," as Paul speaks, 2 Cor. x. 4. Christian discipline punisheth offending members only in their church-fellowship, by depriving them of their communion with the church, shutting them out of it, removing and banishing them from it. Paul speaking of the man, who had taken his father's wife, calls this discipline "a delivering of such a person to Satan," 1 Cor. v. 7. So "he delivered Hymeneus and Alexander to Satan," 1 Tim i. 20. Not that the apostle delivered them to Satan, that he might possess and torment them in a bodily manner; but this delivering of them

to Satan denotes a casting of them out of the church, as he explains it, 1 Cor. v. 13, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." Therefore the Lord Jesus also saith of the contumacious brother, Matt. xviii. 17. "If he will not hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican." For Satan rules out of the church, therefore he who is cast out of the church is delivered up to Satan. And he is thus shut out of the kingdom of heaven, deprived of all the privileges of it, he is forbidden the sacraments, and they are withholden from him, and he is bound fast under his sins, and under destruction. For the Lord God, when this is done agreeably to his word, approves of the conduct of his faithful servants so far, that he himself shuts such a person out of the kingdom of Christ: for with respect to this key the Lord Jesus saith, Matt. xviii. 17, 18. "If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven."

But as the servants of the Lord must not be dilatory in this work, so neither must they be too hasty: "But after having been often brotherly admonished, they will not renounce their errours and wicked course of life, and also despise the admonition of the church." The Saviour requireth "that I first reprove my brother, who hath trespassed against me, in private; if he will not hearken to me, that I then endeavour to reduce him to his duty in the presence of one or two others; if he remain incorrigible, that I then complain of him to the ruling church, to wit, the eldership; if he remain obstinate still, I must then consider him as a heathen man and a publican," Matt. xviii. 15—18. The order of our Dutch church with respect to this matter cannot be censured; it requires that we first admonish the offender; then that we forbid him the Lord's supper for a time; further, that we denounce him to the church, either by, or with his name, that every one may do what in him lieth by admonitions and prayers to reform such a sinner: if all this will not avail, he must then be wholly cut off in a public manner, both that he himself may be ashamed and repent, and also that he may not defile others; and that none may be offended, either within or out of the church, and become averse from her. See this 1 Cor. v. 5, 6. 2 Thess. iii. 14. 2 John vrs. 10, 11.

Erastus and many sons of Belial, who wish to live without yoke, would fain wrest this key out of our hands. Do they allow that the Lord hath given to his servants a power to preach the word, they will nevertheless dispute their power to excommunicate and to shut out of the church, and they decry it as a most unsuitable practice.

But did not the church under the Old Testament cast refractory persons out? did not Christ give this key to his church? Matt. xvi. 19. xviii. 17, 18, did not the apostles make use of this key? 1 Cor. v. 1—13. 2 John, vrs 10, 11, hath not the Christian church always used it? would not the church without this key be a den of robbers, a city without walls, a house without doors or bars, and a garden without an inclosure? would not the holy things be trampled upon by dogs, and unclean swine? the wicked be hardened, and the godly grieved?

But when we shut obstinate persons in this manner out of the church by forbidding them the sacraments, shall we then also debar them from hearing the word? Thus they did anciently, that they might, by terrifying the Christians, render them cautious of offering in any wise to idols, to which many declined in those times of temptation: but this appears to be too harsh. A person is not excommunicated for his destruction, but for his preservation by repentance: how shall he repent, if we withhold the word, the mean of repentance, from him?

When a person, who hath been shut out of the church, repents, must we then always keep him out? so unmercifully the Novatians acted, they would not re-admit even those who had fallen and yielded only from fear in times of persecution. But the Saviour dealt more mildly than this with his apostle Peter. When God opens the door of grace, no man may shut it: we must therefore receive such a person again, as a member of Christ, and of his church yea, we must behave in a friendly manner toward him, forgive him his evil deed, and "comfort him, lest perhaps he should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow." See what Paul saith, 2 Cor. ii. 6—11. We must nevertheless not be too forward or hasty in this matter; when a person only saith, I repent, shall we then presently open the door to him again? ought not the evidences of his repentance and reformation to be as manifest, as his offence was before notorious? Verily the incestuous person was not received again, until he was exceedingly and abundantly sorry, and comfort was necessary for him. Therefore the instructor also saith, that the excommunicated "are received again, when they promise, and show real amendment." The ancient Christian church would not therefore re-admit those who had transgressed, until they had given several evidences of their repentance: they had for this purpose four classes of penitents: the first were the *προκλαιοντες*, or "the weeping and complaining," who stood, clothed with a filthy and black garment, at the door of the church, weeping for their sins, and entreating those who entered into

the church to pray for them: the second class consisted of the *akroomenoi*, or "the hearing," who were permitted to hear in the entrance of the church with the catechumens the word of God read and explained, but were required to withdraw with the catechumens before the supper was administered: the third class were the *hupoptiptontes*, or "the downfalling," who prostrated themselves humbly upon the floor of the church, and confessed their transgression before the congregation, whereupon the minister laid his hands upon them, and bade them arise, when they were placed near the seat of the reader: but these also were obliged to go out of the church with the catechumens; besides these, there were also the *sunistamenoi*, or "those who stood with" the people: these did not depart with the catechumens, but continued standing with the congregation to hear the word of God, and to pray and sing with the believers: they might see the supper administered, but they might not partake of it, although they were after a short time promoted to that privilege. This grievous penance every person, whether high or low, who had committed a scandalous offence, was bound to undergo. Even the emperour Theodosius the Great was not excused, but was obliged to perform a severe penance during eight months; he could not otherwise be reconciled to the church, on account of his shedding the blood of the Thessalonians.

APPLICATION.

This, it will be said, was too severe; but are we not now too slack? those who have eyes to see, and are not wilfully blind, can see it. How many members are there in the church, who join Christ and Belial, righteousness and unrighteousness, yea, who exhibit nothing of Christianity! Alas, how many ungodly persons do we find in the house of God! But what is done against them? who dares cry aloud, and lift up his voice like a trumpet? are there still faithful watchmen, who do not spare any ungodly persons. how seldom is the Christian discipline used to shut them out of the church! where do we find those who are so shut out? are any admonished, reproved, and forbidden to approach the holy table, on account of their gross sins, how easily are they restored! Are any hearty enough in this matter to perform this duty faithfully, how many are there who presently oppose them! This key is in a man-

ner thrown by and suffered to rust. This hardens the wicked, saddens the godly, kindles the wrath of God, and tarnishes the lustre of the house of God.

If it would avail to complain, I would say more; but of what advantage will it be to root in the filthy wounds of our mother? If I could by these means heal them, I might call on all and each of you to unite with me, and to shed a flood of tears over the unsightly condition of our church in the Netherlands. I will do better, if I excite the magistrates and myself, with all my fellowlabourers, and the elders, and every individual to endeavour, as much as in him lieth, to conduct manfully with respect to these keys, according to the word of God.

1. Let the magistrates, (a) submit with humility and lowliness to the kingly sovereignty of the King of kings and Lord of lords. The Lord God saith to the high and mighty ones of the earth, Psalm ii. 6, 10, 11, 12. "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little; blessed are all they who put their trust in him." Have not the great men of the world immortal souls to save, as well as their subjects? and can they do this, if they will not bow to him, who is higher than the highest? or is Jesus a king of the common people only? hath it not been foretold, that the great men of the earth should be subject to him? the prophecies are too numerous to be transcribed here. See Psalm xlviii. 10. lxiii. 10, 11. Isaiah xlix. 7, 23. lx. 3, 10. Rev. xi. 15. Or would it disgrace and degrade the higher powers, if they should stoop to this great King? is not Jesus higher than they? of whom do they hold their honourable stations? this Prince of the kings of the earth saith, Prov. viii. 15, 16. "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." Shall it then be deemed a reproach to princes, if they submit to him? will it not be an honour to them, and increase their lustre? have not godly sovereigns always been most honoured, feared and obeyed? are not the names of David, Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah until this day blessed, when they are remembered? and have not the names of the ungodly kings of Judah and Israel been long since rotten? Let the magistrates therefore seek their happiness, blessedness and glory in submitting to the King of Zion. (b) Magistrates ought also to employ their supremacy, excellency and dignity for the advantage of the church. It was foretold of the

Christian princes, that they should "bring presents, and offer gifts," Psalm lxxii. 10. Hear what the Lord promiseth his church, Isaiah xlix. 23. "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers, they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet." The Lord saith to the church, Isaiah lx. 10. "Strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister to thee." Therefore let all those who possess eminent stations, cherish the church, confirm her privileges, protect her ministers, support the truth, favour her children, restrain her enemies, and with all their might correct the sinful manners of their subjects, which defile the church. Every godly king of Judah, who sat on the throne of David, made this his most special work. "Israel," the church, "is a blessing in the midst of the land," Isaiah xix. 24. The godly bless the land and the rulers of it, on account of the church saying, "Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good," saith David, Psalm cxxii. 3, 9. When the church is well ordered and well cherished, she is the defence of the land, and renders the people victorious. See Zech. xii. 5, 6. Yea, she maintains and establishes princes on their thrones by her admonitions, prayers and exemplary conduct: the wellbeing of the church is of the greatest consequence to the higher powers; and therefore they consult their best interest by doing well to the church; but when they oppress and afflict her, the Lord will behold and require it; for "he suffers no man to do her wrong; yea, he reproves kings for her sake, saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm," Psalm cv. 14, 15.

But, my worthy brethren and fellowlabourers in the work of the Lord, may I not also exhort and excite you with myself, to be faithful, active and zealous in all our ministry? We have an exceedingly great and laborious, but nevertheless excellent work to perform; immortal souls are committed to our care; the Holy Ghost hath made us overseers to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood: the honour of God, the prosperity of the church, and the precious truth are intrusted to us, that we should regard them with a hearty concern: shall we then be negligent of our duty, "blind watchmen, dumb dogs, loving to slumber," and carnal persons, as the prophets of the Lord's people were, Isaiah lvi. 10.—12. Let us then, (a) make use of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, with respect to ourselves: "Thou who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" Thus Paul asked the Jewish teachers, Rom. ii. 21. We must teach the people that they must examine themselves, whether they be in the faith," 2 Cor. xiii. 5, shall we then neglect

this duty with respect to ourselves? Or shall we persuade ourselves that all the preachers are surely believers and godly persons, as the ignorant people imagine, because they are so wise, and can preach and pray so well? Verily those outward things do not prove this, we know better from the examples of Judas and Demas, who showed that the office of a preacher is not one of those better things that accompany salvation: it is certain that the preachers must be born again, and converted, as well as others. Neither the college, nor the classis, nor a call from the church, nor the holy ministry constitutes grace. Have we no more than these things, how grievous will it be for us to sink down from the pulpit into the bottomless pit of hell! O let us judge ourselves, and flee yet to the Saviour, that we may save both ourselves and others. We who call others to the grace of God, and to repentance, are also called by the Lord to be reconciled to him. Do we find, after a strict and frequent examination of ourselves, that we do indeed possess truth in the inward parts, let us make use of the key of the gospel to apply all the promises to ourselves, as Paul acted, 1 Tim. i. 13—16. 2 Tim. i. 12. (b) Let us have a serious concern for immortal souls, who are intrusted to our care, and let us "look well to the flock," according to the admonition of Solomon, Prov. xxvii. 28. If a man fall into the water or fire, who will not make haste to help him out? Shall not we then, whom God hath called to this work, bestir ourselves to pluck sinners out of the fire of hell? It will fare hard with the watchmen of Zion, if a sinner perish through their listlessness: "the Lord will require the blood of that sinner at the hands of the watchman," as he saith, Ezek. iii. 18, 20. (c) The preachers must use the keys discretely: they must not open, when the Lord shuts, neither may they shut when the Lord opens. To greet all their hearers, as beloved, called, and sanctified in Christ Jesus, and to apply the promises of the gospel thus to all, renders the people careless; the doctrine of particular grace doth not permit this. But it is still worse to reproach from the pulpit, to decry as hypocrites, and to deny the holy table to persons who are inwardly religious, who excel the civil and formally religious, and urge others to work out their salvation with fear and trembling. Who is a good overseer? is it it not one who is "a lover of good men?" Tit. i. 8. What preacher, who fears God, dares to "make the hearts of the righteous sad with lies, whom the Lord hath not made sad; and to strengthen the hands of the wicked, that he should not turn from his wicked way?" Every preacher ought to read, yea, to read frequently, Ezek. xxiii. and xxxiv. If a preacher will conduct himself wisely, and according to the word

of the Lord, he must, according to Jude, vrs. 22, 24, "have compassion of some, making a difference; and save others with fear, pulling them out of the fire." He must with Jeremiah, "if he shall be the mouth of God, take the precious from the vile," Jer. xv. 18, "divide the word of truth aright," 2 Tim. ii. 15, and "give the household of the Lord their portion of meat in due season," Luke xii. 42. It is praiseworthy to explain the truth well, it is commendable to reprove hateful sins, if it be done with meekness and wisdom, it is good to publish the promises of the gospel; but it will not suffice to throw every thing out at random, so that few can lay hold on any thing. It is best to penetrate into the heart of the sinner, that we may discover the hidingplaces of his self-deceit, and that he may awake, be concerned, and flee out of himself to the throne of grace; and it would be exceedingly profitable to explain the work of grace to the godly by marks of grace. Every one would then obtain a near view of his heart and be able to see it on every side, and the keys would be used with advantage. Therefore the preachers ought to attend so particularly to every one, that they would know their people near at hand, and how to deal with them to their profit. "Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks," saith Solomon, Prov. xxvii. 13. (d) That we may not be too prolix, we will only say briefly, that the overseers of the church ought to be "examples to the flock," in their behaviour, discourse, apparel, wives and children. 1 Peter v. 3. They ought to love the truth, and to exercise themselves diligently in seeking wisdom, "that their profiting may appear to all." 1 Tim. iv. 15. And to sum up all in the words of Paul, Tit i. 7—9, "A bishop ought to be blameless, as the steward of God, not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort, and convince the gainsayers." It would be profitable to preachers to read often the epistles of Paul to the preachers, Timothy and Titus.

3. But, brethren of the eldership, we do not inform you, that it behooves you to take a part in the duties which belong to the preachers, and we do not speak now of that which was enjoined on you, when ye were ordained to your offices; but we say, take heed, that the keys be not wrenched, nor suffered to rust, but that they be used well. It is your duty to keep a strict eye on the congregation, to visit particular persons, to "warn them who are unruly, to comfort the feeble minded, to support the weak, and to be patient to all men," agreeably to 1 Thes. v. 14. Is there any where an auda-

cious sinner, request of your minister to assist you complain of him to the brotherhood; doth your minister judge it to be necessary to make use of the discipline of the church against such an obstinate person, be willing and ready to help him. Is your minister disheartened, encourage him; is he remiss, stir him up, show that ye love him, as the servant of God, "count him worthy of double honour," according to 1 Tim. v. 17. Then will ye be profitable to him, serviceable to the congregation, and a blessing to yourselves.

4. But the congregation ought also to make a proper use on their part of these keys, and therefore it behooves them, (a) to acknowledge this ecclesiastical power, as given by the Lord to his servants, and to submit themselves to it: "We beseech you, brethren," saith Paul, "to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake," 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. "The Lord hath given them their authority, not for destruction, but for edification," 2 Cor. x. 8. xiii. 10. Ye know what pains your faithful preachers take, yea, that they "travail again, as it were, that Christ may be formed in you," Gal. iv. 19. That ye may recompense them, be ye also enlarged," so I speak with the apostle, 2 Cor. vi. 13. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is not profitable to you," as the same apostle admonisheth, Heb. xiii. 17, 18. (b) I speak to all who hear me this day, behold, I open the kingdom of God to you, and invite you to come to the Lord, and to his goodness, that ye may obtain grace, mercy and peace: "Enter enter through the gates; I pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel." Jesus will not thrust you back, but "him that cometh to him he will in no wise cast out," as he himself saith, John vi. 37. He himself "stands at your door, and knocks, only hear his voice, and open the door to him, that he may come in, and sup with you, and ye with him," Rev. iii. 20. "Do not draw back, for then his soul will not have any pleasure in you," as Paul testifieth, Heb. x. 38. Will ye not come to him, that ye may have life, but harden yourselves, that ye may enjoy the honours, the pleasures and profits of the world and of sin, I say to you in the name of the Lord, that ye shall die, the wrath of God abideth on you, "ye shall see yourselves thrust out," according to Luke xiii. 28. "Now therefore, be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong," as the prophet saith, Isaiah xxviii. 22. (c) But, believers, ye who seek to be loosed from the bonds of sin, who

mourn on account of it, who hasten to Christ, and press after sanctification; . proclaim to you in the name of the Lord that your iniquity is pardoned, and that the Lord will not [illegible] wroth with you nor rebuke you; do not start up against [illegible] ough fretful unbelief, but "receive this preached word, not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, as the word of God," as the Thessalonians did, 1 Thess. ii. 13. Do ye fear that ye will be deceived in the end, and will find the door shut against you, let the foolish virgins fear this, they who have only lamps of profession, but not the oil of grace, yea, who do not seek it, as ye do. Jesus will never shut the door, which he hath opened to you. Hear him say, Rev. iii. 7 "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth" I conclude my present discourse with 2 Peter i. 10, 11. "Wherefore, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Amen.

THE

NECESSITY OF GOOD WORKS.

XXXII. LORD'S DAY.

Titus ii. 14. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Q. 86. *Since then we are delivered from our misery merely of grace through Christ, without any merit of ours, why must we still do good works?*

A. Because that Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by his blood, also renews us by his Holy Spirit, after his own image; that so we may testify by the whole of our conduct our gratitude to God for his blessings, and that he may be praised by us; also, that every one may be assured in himself of his faith by the fruits thereof; and that by our godly conversation others may be gained to Christ.

Q. 87. *Cannot they then be saved, who continuing in their wicked and ungrateful lives, are not converted to God?*

A. By no means; for the holy scripture declares that no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or any such like, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

"GREAT peace have they which love thy law," saith David, Psalm cxix. 165. They have peace with men, who are otherwise

their enemies; for "when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him," Prov. xvi. 7. Have they who love the law of the Lord any enemies, who fight against them, they have nevertheless a great peace, whereby they are so encouraged, that they are fearless of the fiercest and most mighty enemies: "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear," saith that great lover of the law of God, Psalm xxvii. 1, 3. They who love the law of the Lord have a great peace and tranquility in their soul with and in the Lord:" The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, and which keepeth the heart and mind through Jesus," as it is desribed by the apostle, Phil. iv. 7. Is this matter of wonder? Christ hath purchased that great peace for them: "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed," Isaiah liii. 5. The love of the divine law is itself a sweet peace: the person who loves the law "rejoiceth in the way of God's testimonies, more than in all riches," according to Psalm cxix. 14. When he loves the law of God so that he practises it, the Lord rewards him for it with "peace and mercy," as Paul testifieth, Gal. vi. 16. When the first Christians "walked in the fear of the Lord, the comfort of the Holy Ghost was multiplied," Acts ix. 31.

Thus also the instructor understands this matter, when he shows us that we are obliged to manifest gratitude by good works, as a mean of obtaining peace and comfort; for after having proposed our only comfort in the first question of the catechism, he exhibits in the second question three means of obtaining that comfort, namely, the knowledge of our misery, of our deliverance, and of gratitude; for knowing that a knowledge of misery renders the sinner indeed capable of comfort, but that it doth not of itself merit, or procure comfort, he therefore teaches the deliverance of the elect sinner by the Mediator Jesus, who hath obtained peace, and comfort for him. But who can derive peace and comfort from this, while he doth not love the law of the Lord, and conduct according to it? He therefore shows, that if we will live comfortably, we must do good works, as an acknowledgment of that deliverance. This he doth in the third part of the catechism, in which five particulars are proposed:

I. The necessity of good works in the thirty-second Lord's day. II. The principle from which they must be performed, to wit, conversion, Questions 88, 89, 90. III. The nature of good works, Question 91. IV. The rule, according to which good works must be performed, to wit, the law of God, from the 34th, to the 44th Lord's

days. V. The mean of doing good works, namely, prayer, from the 45th, to the 52nd Lord's days

We must attend at present only to the necessity of good works, which is exhibited in this Lord's day by two particulars:

I. The motives that oblige a Christian, who hath been delivered, to perform good works, Q. 86.

II. The impossibility of being saved without performing good works, Q. 87

1. We are taught in the second part of the catechism, that "we are delivered from our misery only of grace by Christ, without any merit of our own." The Papists, who cannot endure this sacred truth, say that then we need not do any good works; yea, they slander us as enemies of good works. They are strengthened in this by the Antinomians, or adversaries of the law, who hold that a person, who hath been delivered, doth indeed do good works, but not as a duty, because Christ hath satisfied the law of duty for those who are delivered. They will admit that the delivered must do good works, because it is their nature, as a vine must bear fruit; but they say that they are not obliged to do them as a duty, which is commanded and enjoined on them, as though this were the work of slaves, and not of the free children of God. Those who have not their senses exercised will think that these things are right and fair; but they who understand the secret, know that these men esteem every action, how abominable soever, to be good; because all things are done according to the eternal decree of God, and therefore according to his will. And what is that eternal decree? an unchangeable law of nature, or fate, which determines all things without God. And so this assertion is the offspring of Atheism, and the denial of a God, tricked up by Spinoza and Van Hattem.

But we, who have learned better, say that a person who is delivered without any merit of his own, merely of grace through Christ, "must" still do good works; not that he may merit by them, as we have proved upon the twenty-third and twenty-fourth Lord's days; and not only because it is become the nature of the delivered, but also as a duty, which they are commanded to do. Believers are commanded again and again to perform good works with a holy fear: the passages are too numerous to be transcribed here. See only Exod. xx. Deut. v. Psalm ii. 11. Phil. ii. 12. Titus iii. 8, 14. Heb iv 2 The delivered glory that "the Lord is their Judge, their Lawgiver and King," Isaiah xxxiii. 22. Must we not obey God according to his commandments? and is not that which we do in obedience to him a good work? Surely believers

must be obedient to God their Father with fear, not as slaves, but as children, as Peter admonisheth, 1 Peter i. 14, 17.

There are also many reasons, which oblige those who are delivered to do good works, whether we attend to the Lord, who obligeth them by himself, and by his benefits, or whether we attend to the ends, for which they must do good works.

1. With respect to the Lord, he is the Most High, and every human creature is subject to God, and to him as the only Lord. God is the most glorious being, alone holy and worthy of himself to be obeyed, believed, feared and served. This lays an everlasting obligation upon the reasonable creature to acknowledge it by good works. In whatsoever condition a man may be, whether delivered by Christ, or still a miserable sinner, he can never discharge himself from this obligation; as long as the Lord is God, this bond will remain upon man: for since the Lord is so excellent, is it not natural and equitable, that his reasonable creature should acknowledge his glory? And how shall the creature acknowledge it? only by his apprehensions of it, and by words? must not all his actions proclaim and declare it? when a Christian acts from this principle, his work is then most pure and excellent. This high excellence of God obligeth his people to do good works: "Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy," saith he, Lev. xix 2. See also 1 Peter i. 15, 16. Hear how the prophet proclaims this to the praise of the Lord, Jer. x. 6, 7. "Forasmuch as there is none like thee, O Lord, thou art great, and thy name is great in might. Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee."

But the Lord God, willing to manifest his kindness, obligeth his people by his goodness and love, to perform good works: for this reason he hath delivered and freed them from their condemnation and misery. Why then do men say, that a person who hath been delivered without any merits of his own, of grace only, is not bound to do good works? He is for this very reason, even that he hath been delivered of grace, bound to do good works. Attend only to the dispensations of the divine grace which each Person in the Godhead exerciseth toward the sinner, in order to his deliverance, and it will appear, that they who are delivered, are under the strongest obligations to do good works, and must do them. For, (1) the Father from eternity foreordained them, elected, and gave them in the council of peace to his Son, that he might deliver them, and that "they might might be conformed to the image of his Son, and be

holy and unblamable," Rom. viii. 29. Eph. i. 4. "He hath called and effectually delivered them out of the power of darkness, and translated them into the kingdom of his dear Son." They must therefore "walk worthily of the vocation wherewith they are called," as Paul enjoineth, Eph. iv. i. The Father establishes also his great covenant of grace with them: "They avouch the Lord to be their God, and the Lord avouches them to be his peculiar people;" but this is done, that they may hearken to his voice, and keep his commandments," as Moses saith, Deut. xxvi 17, 18. Doth he justify them, it is "that he may be feared," Psalm cxxx. 4. Doth he adopt them to be his children, "they must separate themselves from the unclean thing, and walk in fear," 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. 1 Peter i. 17. And when he preserves them, "he puts his fear into their hearts, that they may not depart from him," Jer. xxxii. 40 (2) The Son "hath redeemed and delivered them by his blood," saith the instructor. He bore their punishment, paid the price of his blood for them, and thus satisfied the justice of God. But for what end? was it that he might discharge them from all obligation? Did the Son of God do and suffer so much, that he might be a minister of sin to them? who dares assert this? and nevertheless our adversaries must assert it, when they will maintain, that we are not obliged to do good works, if Christ have delivered us of grace only without any merit of our own. But the Spirit of God speaks otherwise by the mouth of Paul in the text, when he saith, that the Saviour Jesus Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Titus ii. 14. "God hath also exalted him with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentence to Israel," as well as "forgiveness of sins," Acts v. 31. See only how Paul infers from the humiliation and exaltation of Christ the obligation of them who are delivered to do good works, Rom. vi. Are they bought and made free from sin, it is that they may "be servants of righteousness," according to Rom. vi. 18—22. "They are bought with a price, therefore they must glorify God in their body, and in their spirit, which are God's," as Paul teacheth, 1 Cor. vi 20. Yea, shall not this great "love of Christ constrain them," to look upon themselves, as bound to live for him?" certainly yes: see 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. (3) They who are delivered, having been bought with the blood of Christ, are also renewed by his Holy Spirit, after his image; for "he is made unto them of God sanctification," as well as "righteousness," 1 Cor. i. 30. And therefore he hath given them "his Holy Spirit to renew them," after his image, See Titus iii. 4, 5, 6. By this renewing

after his image "Christ is formed in them," Gal. iv. 19. They become "partakers of the divine nature, 2 Peter i. 4. Yea, "they are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord," as the apostle teacheth, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Must not such persons do good works? may they forbear to act conformably to him in holiness? It is become their nature to do good works; for they who are delivered are "the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that they should walk in them," Eph. ii. 10. They must also do them, because they are commanded to resemble him, in holiness, 1 Peter i. 15, 16. How is it possible, that they who are delivered should not be obliged to do good works? for the Holy Ghost dwells in them, leads and comforts them; therefore Paul saith, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are," 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. He saith the same also, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

2. If we consider the ends of good works, we shall perceive clearly, that the delivered must do good works. The instructor mentions three ends of good works: the first and chief end is, "that we may testify by the whole of our conduct our gratitude to God for his blessings, and that he may be praised by us." Gratitude is a cheerful acknowledgment of the kindness of the Lord, manifested in his benefits, and it induceth us to surrender ourselves to him, in order to serve him. Wonderfully great and many are the benefits, which God bestows upon those whom he delivers. We have now spoken only very briefly of them, but more largely before from the fifth Lord's day to the present. Must not those who are delivered be constrained to gratitude by these benefits? is it not their duty? had not God's ancient people their thankofferings, as well as their sacrifices of slain beasts? Because the Lord doth not now impose such a heavy burthen upon them whom he hath delivered, but is kinder to them than he was to his ancient people, must they therefore be unthankful? is the duty of "offering thanksgiving to God" now abolished? Psalm l. 14. None will say that it is. But how shall we be thankful? It will surely not be enough to "say Lord, Lord, and not to do the will of our Father," Matt. vii. 21. We must evince our thankfulness by doing good works, in order to manifest that we have wholly surrendered ourselves to the service of God, as an acknowledgment of his benefits. Hear what Paul saith of this, Rom. xii. 1. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, accepta-

ble to God, which is your reasonable service." In this manner do we testify gratitude to God, and praise him with our whole lives, in all that we do, and forbear, "whether we eat, or whether we drink, or whatsoever we do, we do all to the glory of God," according to 1 Cor. x. 31. Yea, "the delivered must serve the Lord in holiness and righteousness, all the days of their lives," Luke i. 74, 75.

The other end is "that each one may be assured in himself of his faith by the fruits thereof." As there are so many, who have only an apparent faith, as believers are not always sufficiently enlightened to perceive the soundness of their faith, and as every believer hath not his senses exercised to discern between good and evil, and faith is often weak, and obscured by many mists of corruption, therefore believers are not always certain, that they possess a true faith. The Holy Spirit, in order to assure them that they possess a true faith, besmines them with his light, by which they behold clearly "the things" (and therefore faith also) "that are freely given them of God," 1 Cor. ii. 12. Yea, he gives them sometimes a strong and sensible assurance of the love of God, and of the forgiveness of their sins, and that in several ways, as we have shown on different occasions. See the first and the twenty-third Lord's days. But as this assurance doth not always abide with the soul, and as temporary believers often exhibit a counterfeit assurance, (for they also sometimes taste the heavenly gift, and the powers of the world to come) therefore good works are, as fruits of faith, the best evidences of a true faith: "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit: neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit," saith the Saviour, Matt. vii. 18, and "the tree is known by its fruit," Matt. xii. 33. Therefore good works are very often proposed, as marks for trial, see Psalm xv. and xxiv. 2 Peter i. 4—10. 1 John iii. 14. James more especially doth this: "What doth it profit, my brethren," saith he, chap. ii. 14—26. "though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? Faith, if it have not works, is dead, being alone, Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." He shows also in that passage that Abraham and Rahab were justified by works, as evidences of faith. What is your opinion now, hearers, doth it not concern those who are delivered to be assured? and must they not then do good works, that they may have a steadfast and indisputable assurance?

The third end of good works is, "that others may be gained to Christ by the godly conversation of them who are delivered." The wicked, who know not God, seeing the love, which the delivered have to God and their neighbour, their humility, their self-denial,

heavenly-mindedness, meekness and moderation, conclude therefrom that God is worthy to be loved and feared. They harden themselves against the word of reproof and admonition, but this light stings their eyes, and pierces their hearts so, that "they are convinced and judged, the secrets of their hearts are manifested, and falling down on their faces, they worship God, and report that God is in his people of a truth," 1 Cor. xiv 24, 25. "The husbands are won without the word by the holy conversation of the wives," and many "are made ashamed," as Peter saith, 1 Peter iii. 1, 2, 16. Yea, the earnest piety of the delivered will awaken drowsy Christians, and they who are fervent in spirit will become more fervent: "Your zeal hath provoked very many," saith Paul, 2 Cor. ix. 2. See Phil. i. 14 Is it not the duty of every person to win his neighbour for Christ? ought he not, like Christ's "sheep, to bring forth twins, and to be fruitful?" Song iv. 2 vi. 6. Will the fair spoken Christian, the Christian only in words do this? no; even the wicked presently perceive, that he is a mere talker, and they become more averse from godliness than before, when they do not see good works joined to speaking of God and divine things. Must not the delivered then do good works? Surely the Lord Jesus commands it, when he saith to his people, Matt. v. 16. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" Paul requireth the same thing, Philip. ii. 15.

II. It is therefore certain, that they who are delivered without any merit of their own, merely of grace through Christ, must do good works. But what will become of those, "who continuing in their wicked and ungrateful lives, are not converted to God? cannot they be saved?" Thus asks the instructor, and he teaches us to answer, "By no means." This is not a mere fiction of his own brain, but he appeals to "the holy scripture, which saith, that no unchaste person, &c. shall inherit the kingdom of God." The instructor is in the right, for this is declared, 1 Cor. vi. 10 Eph. v. 5. Yea, the word of God saith, "that the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience," on account of such shameful sins, Psalm xi. 6. Eph. v. 6. Col. iii. 5, 6. And "they who live after the flesh shall die," Rom. viii. 13. "Without are dogs, &c. Rev. xxii 15. Such abominable persons shall not be saved, nor any others, who are not truly sanctified according to the image of God, however civil and devout they may otherwise be; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," saith Paul, Heb. xii. 14. The Saviour himself saith, Matt. v. 20. "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the king-

dom of heaven." And this is also reasonable; for God is holy, "he is of purer eyes than to behold evil," Hab i. 13. How then should the unholy and loathsome sinner appear before him, and enjoy the embraces of his blessed love? David saith, Psalm v. 4, 5, 6 "Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man." We may not think that Christ hath satisfied for them, and bought them with his blood, and that they will therefore be saved, though they be ever so ungodly; for such persons manifest that Christ hath not bought them, for he would then have delivered them from the practice of sin because, according to our text," he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The Lord saith, Isaiah lix. 20. "The redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them, that turn from transgression in Jacob." Paul saith indeed, Heb. v. 9, that "the Lord Jesus is become the author of eternal salvation unto all," but he limits those all, when he saith that "they obey him,"

Therefore it cannot avail, either the Papists, or the Antinomians, that we teach that Christ hath satisfied the law for them whom he delivereth, and it doth not follow therefrom, that if they must still do good works, God would then demand the debt twice; for he satisfied the law, not that he might discharge the delivered from their natural obligation, for they cannot be discharged from that obligation, unless they can cease to be creatures, and become Gods; but the Son of God satisfied, that he might take away guilt, and obtain sanctification; for "he is made to them righteousness and sanctification," 1 Cor. i. 30. And therefore he satisfied, that he might strengthen that eternal obligation. The delivered must do good works, not to satisfy like Jesus, but for the reasons, which we have mentioned

They say, "believers are not under the law," Rom. vi. 14. "The law is not made for the righteous," &c. 1 Tim i. 9, 10. Are they then on that account discharged from all obedience and subjection to the Lord? no: but they are not under the law, as the condition of the covenant of works, promising life to them who observe the law perfectly, and threatening those who transgress it with a curse, Gal iii. 13. Rom. iii 19, 20.

The Antinomians object further, that if the delivered "must" do good works, they will do them not from a childlike heart, and willingly, but from constraint, like slaves. But this "must" is not

from constraint, but from obligation and a willing mind, as children, "must." obey their parents, and nevertheless obey them willingly. See 1 Peter i. 14—17. Psalm cx. 23. That it may consist with willingness, that a person may do a thing from obligation, we learn from Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 16, 17.

APPLICATION.

Therefore when we urge the necessity of good works by such reasons, may we not then, hearers, conclude in opposition to our adversaries, that we have the plainest and most certain proof that the doctrine of our church is agreeable to the word of God? for we deny thus all our own righteousness, seeking our salvation as sinners in Christ only, and we assign no other reasons for sanctification, than those which the word of God exhibiteth to us. The doctrine of "truth is according to godliness," it is "a mystery of godliness," Titus i. 1. 1 Tim. iii. 16. When we therefore urge persons to godliness and good works from the purest principle, even their gracious deliverance through Christ, without any merit of their own, by the most suitable and powerful arguments, may we not then rest assured, that the pure truth is taught by us alone? is it not then a vile calumny of our adversaries, when they say, that we are enemies of good works? It is true, that as there is no heretic, who will not appeal to scripture, so there is no erroneous spirit who will not pretend to a form of godliness, unless we will except the Antinomians. But what are the grounds and reasons of their good works? the Papists assert that good works are meritorious, obliging God to them, and so they do good works like hirelings, slaves, and legalists. The Remonstrants and Socinians speak only of free-will, of a law improved by Christ, and of his example; the Remonstrants add for decency's sake, a general and sufficient grace, which, if they would speak plainly, would be nothing else but free-will, and the outward revelation; for they cannot name aught that is given by God besides free-will, and the outward revelation. But are these things sufficient to influence the soul, which is incapable of good, and disinclined to it? They may urge her to a certain heathenish morality, but they will not effectually captivate her, and conduct her to unfeigned holiness.

Since then we have such a holy and sanctifying doctrine, is it not

lamentable, that we do not maintain good works more than we do? It is evident that many among us do not practise good works; for where do we see our people "deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, as the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, and which hath appeared to us, teacheth?" as the apostle speaks, Titus ii. 11, 12. In whom do we see that separating of themselves from the world, that strict godliness, that holy resignation to the Lord, to do his will in all things, that heavenly mindedness, and that hearty love to God and his people? the most do not know the model, the pattern, of these things. Is it not true, hearers? it is surely evident: for

1. Many, like the Antinomians, look upon it to be unnecessary to do good works; why, think they, are they necessary? and they will, though not with words, yet with deeds, justify the Papists, who say, that if we be saved without any merit of our own, of grace through Christ, we need not then do good works. It is as though we did works which had been done already. Are there any who look upon good works to be necessary, who separate themselves from the generality, "let their light shine, and do something more than others," according to the commands of Christ, Matt. v. 16, 46, 47, they presently cry out against such persons, as Pharisees, hypocrites, and legalists: with the wicked Jews, "they sport themselves, they make a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue," Isaiah lvii. 4. Do ye then in this manner think to break the yoke, and to burst the bonds, which God hath laid on you, in order to bind you to him, and his service? is Christ in this manner become the minister of sin, that he may procure you freedom to practise iniquity; will ye in this manner continue in sin, that grace may abound, and do evil, that good may come? "Your damnation is just," saith Paul, Rom. iii. 8. It is shameful, that ye will not do good works yourselves; but it is particularly abominable, that ye endeavour to discharge yourselves from your obligation to do them; and it is still worse that ye oppose those who do them. What have ye to do among us, who urge the necessity of good works, according the word of God? and why do ye not join the Antinomians, for ye are of one mind with them? Rather suffer yourselves to be instructed and see with concern how far ye have swerved in your apprehensions and conduct from the doctrine of truth, which is according to godliness.

2. But others will say, we for our parts know better; we look upon good works to be necessary. I allow that ye do; ye have a thorough and excellent knowledge of the doctrine of truth, and can

defend it manfully, ye can stop the mouths of the Papists, and can confound the Antinomians. But do ye also do good works? what are they? are ye weaned from the world, and from your own inclinations, and are ye dead to your lusts? is God the great object of your pursuits? do ye strive to do his will? where is your lowliness, your humility? how doth your love to your neighbour appear? do ye show yourselves meek, courteous, gentle, friendly, and ready to forgive the shame, the loss, and the pain, which ye suffer from wicked men? In what respect doth your light shine? in respect to your apparel, demeanour and discourse? We do not see it, but we should see it, if it did shine. Notwithstanding all your civility, honesty, devotion, and liberality to the poor; your earthlymindedness, selfseeking, dissoluteness, pride and alienation from God still appear in all your doings. Yea, how many are there, who, though they have been taught better, are guilty of wicked works! I mean you, ye irreligious persons, violators of the name and day of God: you who indulge yourselves in hatred, envy, anger, revenge, lasciviousness, gluttony, drunkenness, voluptuousness, falsehood and deceit; yea, as though ye had quitted yourselves well, who "declare your sins like Sodom," with the Jews, Isaiah iii. 9. Are not these abominable sins? and do ye not aggravate them to the utmost, when ye practise them against your better knowledge? "To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin," as James speaks, James iv. 17. Do ye not dishonour God among the enemies of the truth? do ye not occasion that the way of truth, yea, that "the name of God is blasphemed on your account, as it is written?" Rom. ii. 17—24. Ye cannot imagine that ye will be saved, if ye proceed in this way: "Your own mouth condemns you, and not I," may I say with Eliphaz, Job. xv. 6. Ye certainly do not exhibit any evidence, that Christ hath redeemed you, and delivered you by his blood; ye have not yet been renewed after his image. Or do ye think to escape destruction by "saying Lord, Lord, without doing the will of your Father?" Jesus will reject you, according to Matt. vii. 21, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them," saith the Saviour, John xiii. 17. But "the servant who knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes," thus speaks also your great Judge, Luke xii. 47.

Alas! friends, look well to yourselves, that ye may escape the wrath to come. Descend into yourselves, behold your abominable disposition and conduct: think seriously of your immortal souls, the importance of eternal salvation and damnation, break off your iniqui-

ties, and "work the work of God, believing on him, whom he hath sent," John vi. 29. So ye will escape the damnation of hell, and be able, yea, willing to do good works.

But may we not take up a lamentation for some of those who are delivered, on account of their unbecoming conduct, and say, Lam. iv. 2 "The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!" Where, O believers, is your former and first walking with God, the love of your espousals, your resignation to the Lord, in order to serve him, your tenderness, and carefulness not to conduct yourselves unbecomingly, and that hearty love to good men? men can scarcely conceive any more what this means, they have declined so far from it. The world hath taken away their heart, their sins, which had been smothered a long time, begin to revive, and how many sinful emotions, and evil inclinations are entertained and winked at! their heartiness, liveliness and vigour are abated; when they will exert themselves, and "shake themselves," they experience, like Samson, too late, Judges xvi. 20, 21, that "the Lord is departed from them," and that the infernal "Philistines have seized on them," and with Paul, that they are "brought into captivity to the law of sin, which is in their members," Rom. vii. 23. And so the soul becomes discouraged, a burthen to herself, and to others, yea, even to the Lord, and she reproaches his name: "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy Father, that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?" Deut. xxxii. 6. Hear what "he, who holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, and who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks," saith to you also. Rev. ii. 1, 4, 5. I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." Therefore, as Paul admonisheth, Heb. xii. 12, 13, 14. "Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees. And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed. Follow after peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

Come then, ye sluggish persons, let me arouse and persuade you, yea, you also, whose souls glow with zeal to strive for perfection, that ye may be urged the more to "run and not be weary, to walk and not faint," Isaiah xl. 31. (a) Is not the Lord worthy to be feared, loved, served and obeyed by you? hath he not deserved it at your

hands by all his favours? hath not the Saviour made you "his people," by purchasing you with his blood, that ye might be "zealous of good works?" according to the text? doth it not then become you to be thankful to him? yea, have ye not surrendered yourselves to him, and bound yourselves, as it were, with an oath, like David, "to keep his righteous judgments?" Psalm cxix. 106. Will ye not now perform your oath? (b) Is there aught that is sweeter, more delightful, or that can rejoice the soul more? Ye know experimentally that the life of God, and doing his will, is the life, the element, the meat, drink, and sound health of your souls; "It is joy to the just to do judgment," saith the wisest of kings, Prov. xxi. 15. David saith of himself, Psalm cxix. 14. "I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches." And cannot each of you believers, bear witness of himself in truth, with the great Paul, Rom. vii. 22. "I delight in the law of God after the inward man?" On the contrary, what bitterness, vexation, restlessness and continual perturbation is there in sin! How often must ye complain with David, Psalm xxxviii. 3, 4, 18. "There is no rest in my bones, because of my sin; for mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as a heavy burthen they are too heavy for me. I am distressed on account of my sin." Do not then embrace your own sorrow, but delight in living strictly and circumspectly to the Lord. (c) If your holy living to God should not profit your souls in the least, would ye not still reckon it your happiness? how much more should ye then be urged to live such a life now, when "in keeping God's commandments there is a great reward?" Psalm xix. 11. "The Lord will not be sought in vain," Isaiah xlv. 9 "He will not suffer you to shut the doors of his house, nor kindle fire on his altar for nought," Mal. i. 10. "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do yet minister," saith Paul, Heb. vi. 10. He bestows for "a cup of cold water, which we give to his little ones," a great and a sure reward, Matt. x. 42 Is it not true? ye know that when the soul endeavours to do his will, she acquires a glorious conformity to his image, 2 Cor. iii. 18, that your heart becomes established, that your soul is enlightened, and obtains an undoubted assurance; that "the Father and the Son love you," and manifest it by "revealing themselves to you, and by coming to you, and making their abode with you," as the Lord Jesus promiseth, John xiv. 21, 23. Would ye not "convert a sinner from the error of his way, save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins?" as the apostle speaks, James v. 20, would ye not at least excite

Christians, who are become remiss? surely ye would. Ye cannot do this better than by a manly activity in doing good works; and to whom will "God render eternal life? will he not to them, who by a patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality?" Rom. ii. 7.

Have ye therefore a desire to bestir and exert yourselves to do good works. (a) Let then your eternal obligation to the Lord, and all the reasons of duty, which we have mentioned, impress your souls; "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, incline thine ear, forget also thy father's house, and thine own people: so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him," Psalm xlv. 10, 11. This would retain you always under the bond and yoke of discretion; therefore bind yourselves frequently to serve the Lord, and say with the man after God's own heart, "O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant," Psalm cxvi. 16. (b) Endeavour to watch and to keep your hearts, and outward senses and members; for these often mislead and seduce the soul, and detach her from her strictness; "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left; remove thy feet from evil," Prov. iv. 23—27. Beware of looking at evil examples, especially of persons, who are eminently pious; for these are powerful means of seduction. When Peter dissembled, the other Jews dissembled likewise, so that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation," Gal. ii. 11, 12, 13. (c) Depend upon Christ, as your pattern, and imitate him, Eph. v. 1, 2. For this end he suffered and acted in every respect in a holy manner, 1 Peter ii. 21—24. Look upon him as "made sanctification to you," 1 Cor. i. 30, and seek that "help which is laid on him," Psalm lxxxix. 19. (d) "Reach forth and press toward perfection," with Paul, Philip. iii. 12, 13, 14 (e) Do ye fall, lie not still through discouragement, but rise up again repeatedly. See Jer. viii 4. (f) Be not satisfied with one good work, but "be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and the praise of God," agreeably to the admonition of the apostle, Phil. i. 11. "Give all diligence to add to your faith virtue," &c. 2 Peter i. 5—11. Yea, see that all your actions are good, doing them in the name of Jesus, and to the glory of God, according to Col. iii. 18. 1 Cor. x. 31. (g) Perform not good works by any means from a slavish fear, or in order to have a claim on God.

but as the redeemed, delivered and peculiar people of Christ, agreeably to the text. (h) In order to obtain assurance by good works, do not compare yourselves with those who are further advanced than ye are, with your great duty, or with the strength of the old man: but consider your desire and love to holiness, and your opposition to sin, and "the willingness of your mind, which renders you acceptable," 2 Cor. viii. 12.

Do ye not think highly of your good works, because they are few, and exceedingly defective, the Lord will discover to you and others the good that is in them, and that proceedeth from his Spirit, how ye have confessed his truth, embraced his grace, earnestly longed for his promises, obeyed his commandments, fought against sin, pressed toward perfection, prayed in secret; yea, he will more than Paul, "remember your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Thess. i. 3, and he will according to his promise, Psalm lxxx. 7, enable you to "go from strength to strength, and every one of you shall appear before God in Zion," Amen.

THE

NATURE OF CONVERSION

AND OF

GOOD WORKS.

XXXIII. LORD'S DAY.

2 Cor. vii. 10, 11. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold, this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!

Q. 88. *In how many parts doth the true conversion of man consist?*

A. In two parts; in the mortification of the old, and in the quickening of the new man.

Q. 89. *What is the mortification of the old man?*

A. It is a sincere sorrow of heart that we have provoked God by our sins; and more and more to hate and flee from them.

Q. 90. *What is the quickening of the new man?*

A. It is a sincere joy of heart in God, through Christ, and with love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works.

Q. 91. But what are good works?

A. Only those which proceed from a true faith, are performed according to the law of God, and to his glory; and not such as are founded on our imagination, or the institutions of men.

"A GOOD man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man, out of theevil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh." Thus speaks the Lord Jesus, Luke vi. 45. The tongue, and all the outward actions are the interpreters of the heart, and show how a person is internally disposed. The index will show whether a clock is in order or whether it is not; the vessel will afford that which it contains; and as the fruit is, so is the tree: "For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit," saith the Saviour, Luke vi. 43. Thus it is also with a man; if he be good, he will do that which is good, and if he be evil, he will do that which is evil. The sinner hath by nature a wicked and an unbelieving heart to depart from the living God, and he manifests it in all that he doth. Therefore the Saviour said to the slandering Pharisees, Matt. xii. 34. "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things?" What remedy is there for this? shall the sinner only amend his conduct in some measure, and accustom his tongue to decent language? This is impossible: the evil treasure of his heart will, though he strive against it, continually yield and bring forth evil things; the heart must therefore be changed and amended, if it shall afford better things. If we will "make the fruit good, we must first make the tree good," as Jesus speaks, Matt. xii. 43. As we make a tree and its fruit good by inserting a better graft into it, so the sinner must also be ingrafted into Christ, that he may "partake of the root, and fatness of that olive tree." Rom. xi. 17. But how shall he be ingrafted into him? by regeneration, faith and conversion, whereby, being wholly changed to that which is good, he brings forth also good works. So Paul showed that the sinner "must first repent, and that then he must do works meet for repentance." Acts xxvi 20.

In this manner doth the instructor also proceed. After he had insisted on the necessity of good works, he doth not hasten to the law, as the rule of good works, but requires first that the heart of man, which is evil, should be changed, that he may out of that good treasure also bring forth good works.

There are two particulars in this Lord's day, which require our exposition:

I. The nature of conversion, Questions 88, 89, 90.

II. The nature of good works, Question 91.

I. The Remonstrants imagine that the instructor ought not to have treated of conversion here, but before the doctrine of deliverance, that so the work of man might precede the grace of God, as if the grace of God did not prevent the works of man, and conversion did not flow from our deliverance. We cannot understand any thing, unless we understand the name that expresseth the nature of that thing. The word *bekeeren* in our Low Dutch language, as also the Hebrew word *schub*, to return, and the Greek word *epistrephein*, to convert, to convert ourselves, signifieth to turn again to that from which we had turned away before; and it expresses therefore very properly the nature of conversion. God had created man for himself, and after his image, but man is by sin turned from God to himself, to sin, and to Satan; but by conversion, he turns himself from himself, from sin and Satan to the Lord, that he may obtain mercy of him, and live for him; in this manner is conversion described, Isaiah xxxi. 6. "Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted." So "Paul was sent to turn the Gentiles from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith in Christ," Acts xxvi. 17, 18.

But let us penetrate somewhat deeper into this matter. That conversion should consist, as the Romanists fancy, "in sorrow of heart, in confession with the mouth, auricular confession, and in making satisfaction with our works, by undergoing a certain penance, which the priest, who is the confessor, imposes upon the sinner," this is an invention, which is beside the word of God, it is no gracious work of God, nor virtue of man, but a mere punishment, and an engine to torture the conscience. This conversion of the Papists is not as good as the conversion of Judas; for he "repented," and had more sorrow of heart, than is required of any Papist, for "he hanged himself;" he confessed his sins also very circumstantially to the priests, when he said, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." He satisfied readily and actually, when "he brought the thirty pieces of silver again to the chief priests and elders," Matt. xxvii. 3, 4, 5.

The instructor rejecting a false, or a half and pretended conversion, like that of Cain, Saul, Ahab, Judas, and the Popish conversion inquires concerning "a true" conversion, which he describes as con

sisting in two parts, 1. The mortification of the old man, 2. The quickening of the new man.

1. The old man, as we may all easily conceive, is not another person, distinct from the man who is converted, but the evil disposition, which is in the man himself, to wit, the natural corruption of man, destitute of the image of God, and possessed of the image of Satan, which fills his soul with hideous abominations, excites him to every abominable sin, and urges him on from sin to sin. "The old man is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts," saith Paul, Eph. iv. 22. This evil disposition is called *a man*, not only because it possesseth the whole man, "defiles his understanding and conscience," and whatsoever he doth, Titus i. 15, 16, and "rules in his mortal body," Rom. vi. 12, and because the man loves it, as much as he loves himself, 2 Tim. iii. 2; but also because it hath all the parts of a man. There is "a fleshly mind," Col. ii. 18, "desires and a will of the flesh," Eph. ii. 3, "a body of sin," Rom. vi. 6. "flesh," John iii. 6, "members on earth," Col. iii. 5, "a life after the flesh," Rom. viii. 13. It is not without reason, that it is called also "the old" man; for it is as old as the man himself, and is born with him, Psalm li. 5. Gen. viii. 21. Yea, it is as old as Adam, through whose sin this old man hath been transmitted to all his descendents; for after Adam had by his first sin admitted this old man, "he begat a son in his own likeness, after his image," Gen. v. 3. This is explained very beautifully by the apostle, when he saith, 1 Cor. xv. 47, 48, 49. "The first man is of the earth, earthy. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy. We bear the image of the earthy." We may therefore call this old man the old Adam. This old man doth wholly possess and rule over the sinner, while in his natural state, John iii. 6, but exists only in part in those who possess grace, vexing them, and violently taking them captive against their will, but not ruling over them, according to Rom. vi. 14. vii. 22, 23.

Conversion consists in the mortification of the old man. This mortification is explained by the instructor, as consisting in a twofold assault on the old man, by which a mortal wound is given him. The first is "a sincere sorrow of heart, that we have provoked God by our sins." We cannot understand wherein this sincere sorrow consists, without considering the several steps of our conversion. (a) The sinner bereaved of his reason before his conversion, knowing nothing of himself, and running headlong on in sin, comes in the work of conversion to himself, with the prodigal son, Luke xv. 17. He looks into himself and sees clearly and experimentally his abominable apostacy from God, the evil disposition of his soul, and

the unseemliness of all his behaviour; yea, he looks back, and sees that his whole life is filled with abominable actions, and the sins of his youth are brought distinctly to his view. This affects him with shame; he is amazed that he is so abominable, and that he hath not known it before: "He repents of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?" Jer viii. 6. He had before this heard others discourse somewhat of God, of the law and of sin, and he also spoke of these things, but he now sees the things themselves, as they relate to himself, in their nature, and cries out with Job. chap. xlii. 5, 6, "I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. See this also in "Ephraim, who, when he was converted, was instructed, he smote upon his thigh; he was ashamed: yea, even confounded," Jer. xxxi 19. And thus he becomes wise again, as the Greek word *metanoein*, and the Latin *resipiscere*, to repent, denote. He stops not here, but (b) he sees also with sensible sorrow how guilty and damnable he is before God; before this he thought with backsliding Israel, Jer. ii. 35, that "the anger of God was turned away from him," and with the wicked, Psalm l 21, "that God was altogether such an one as himself," and that he would not punish him. But he now sees that God beholds him in wrath; he "trembles" at it, "and is astonished," with Paul, Acts ix. 6. He hath "a godly sorrow, accompanied with fear," 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11. "He knows and sees," now experimentally, "that it is an evil thing and bitter, that he hath forsaken the Lord his God," Jer. ii. 19. He condemns himself, and cries out with Judah, "Wo unto me, that I have sinned," Lam. v. 16. He justifies God with David, Psalm l. 4, and humbles himself with the publican, "stands afar off, dares not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven, and smites upon his breast," Luke xviii. 13. (c) Sometimes he endeavours to reform himself, and will not sin so any more; but he discovers that all his best performances are wholly abominable, with the church he looks upon "his own righteousness as filthy rags." Isaiah lxiv. 6. He is disappointed in all that he attempts; will he forsake his sins, they beset him continually anew, lay hold on him, and overcome him; will he pray, his heart will not accompany him; will he read or hear the word, he finds an immovable and insensible heart, and he discovers thus experimentally his inability, and that "he is abominable, and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate." Titus i. 16. This affects him with shame and humility not only before the Lord, but also before men, whom he "esteems better than himself," Philip. ii. 3. Before he was convinced, he was in his own eyes much wiser

more capable and more virtuous than others: but now he looks upon himself with Paul to be "the chief of sinners," 2 Tim. i. 15, and "one born out of due time," 1 Cor. xv. 8. Before this he was never so base, but he still knew of a remedy, and he had always a hope, that he should be saved; but now he gives up his hope that he will obtain life in his own way, and by his own doings; he knows not what he shall do for his recovery, and "he saith, There is no hope," Isaiah lvii. 10. He is sometimes ready through dejection to abandon the whole work of his salvation, because he knows not indeed what course he must take; but as the distress of his mind continueth with him, and he hath also an earnest desire that his soul should be saved, he speaks to them who are wiser than himself, and asks "What must I do to be saved," like the jailer, Acts xvi. 30. See also Acts ii. 37. ix. 6.

This hearty sorrow of his soul proceeds also so far, that it affects his body. His countenance gathers blackness, his eyes weep bitterly, like Peter's, Matt. xxvi. 75, his mouth complains, and confesseth his sins, like David's, Psalm xxxii 5, his hand smites on his breast, like the publican's, Luke xviii. 13, his feet go softly, his stomach fasts, and he manifests every token of repentance; for the afflicted soul finds no comfort, except only in sorrow, with the prophet, Jer. viii. 18.

The Antinomians, or adversaries of the law, looking upon such a sorrow, as unnecessary, yea, as sinful, show that they understand not the abominable nature of sin, nor the work of conversion, and that they do not attend to the word of God, which admonisheth us repeatedly to humble ourselves and repent, and informs us how the saints humbled themselves See Joel ii. 13. Psalm vi. xxxii xxxviii. lv. cxxx. Jer. xxxi. 18, 19. Acts ii. 37 ix. 6. xvi. 29, 30. 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11, and how "they who mourn are comforted," Matt. v. 4.

2. "By the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better," saith Solomon, Eccl. vii. 3. And so the second assault, by which we mortify the old man, is "more and more to hate and flee from sin." When the sinner, during his conversion, bewails his sin with so much bitterness, he cannot caress it any more, as he used; it is not sweet any more in his mouth; he will not hide it any longer under his tongue, in order to spare it, but he will forsake it, and will not keep it in his mouth; this meat is turned in his bowels, it is to him like the gall of asps within him. For (a) he hates sin, he hath an antipathy to it, and an aversion from it; nothing is so hateful and filthy in his eyes as sin. Because he sees now by the light of God what sin is, therefore he is seized with horrour, when it is only men-

tioned, and he hath a dread of it. And so he "abhors that which is evil," Rom. xii. 9. "Godly sorrow worketh indignation," according to the text. "He hates even the garment spotted by the flesh," as Jude speaks in his epistle, vrs. 23. (b) Being so averse from sin, he will also actually turn from it, and "cast it away" as the most hateful thing, and "as a menstruous cloth, and will say" to every sin, (although formerly ever so honourable, profitable and pleasant to him) "Get thee hence," as it is said of those who are converted, Isaiah xxx. 22. He flees from sin, as from his greatest enemy, he is exceedingly cautious and careful, that sin may not take hold of him; he avoids it, and the occasions of it; "he keeps himself, that the wicked one may not touch him," as John speaketh, 1 John v. 18. He keeps himself from the iniquity, to which he is most prone, with David, Psalm xviii. 23. He takes heed to his heart, and to all his members, that he may not be turned aside, according to the admonition of the wise king, Prov. iv. 23—27. With Job "he makes a covenant with his eyes," Job xxxi 1. with holy David, "he keeps himself by the words of God's lips from the paths of the destroyer, holding up his goings in the paths of the Lord, that his footsteps may not slip," Psalm xvii. 4, 5. Yea, with that man after God's heart, "he will take heed to his ways, that he sin not with his tongue, and he will keep his mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before him," Psalm xxxix. 1. (c) As sin nevertheless lightly besets him, as his corrupt heart continually works up all manner of filth, the world flatters him, and the devil goeth about, seeking to devour him, he will therefore also manfully withstand and fight against all these. He observes by what means they seek to bring him to a fall; he rejects their solicitations, he endeavours to subdue, to annoy them, and to "mortify the deeds of the body through the Spirit," as Paul speaks of converted persons, Rom. viii. 13. "He keeps" the lusts of "his body under, and brings it into subjection," with Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 27 "He puts on the whole armour of God, he girds his loins about with the truth, he puts on the breastplate of righteousness, he hath his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, he takes above all the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." He exercises himself much in fasting and prayer, that he may expel that evil kind, and may seek help of the Lord against his enemies, that he may be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," Eph. vi. 10—18. Therefore he prays with David, whom we have often mentioned, that God would keep his heart from the dominion of presumptuous sins, that he would direct his words and thoughts in

such a manner, that they may be acceptable to him, and that he would set a watch before his mouth and lips, Psalm xix. 13, 14. cxli. 3. And he manifests thus "zeal and revenge" against his sins, as the text speaks.

This hearty sorrow, this hatred and fleeing from sin is the mortification of the old man. For thus he is condemned to die, he is tortured, he is deprived of his food, a deathwound is inflicted on him, and his ruling power is taken from him. It is true, he struggles and bestirs himself yet strongly, but these are only the pangs and throes of death, which will never restore him to his former vigour, nor wholly subdue the converted soul.

2. Nevertheless conversion doth not consist only in the mortification of the old man, but also "in the quickening of the new man." The apostle teaching the converted this, saith not only, Coll. iii. 3, "Ye are dead," but also, "your life is hidden with Christ in God." As the old man is the evil disposition and corruption of the sinner, so the new man is the good disposition of the converted man, or nature renewed after the image of God and of Christ, that clear knowledge of God, and that pure and true holiness, whereby a man is like God, and is urged to do the will of God only. See Coll. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 23, 24. This good disposition is called *a man*, not only because it possesseth the whole man, who is altogether "a new creature," 2 Cor. v. 17, and is as dear to the converted man as he is to himself, but also because it hath all the parts of a man, as "enlightened eyes of the understanding," Eph i. 18, a "will to that which is good," Rom. vii. 19, "a life in the flesh according to the will of God," 1 Peter iv. 2. This renewed nature is also called a *new* man. not only because the converted man is newborn, See John iii. 3, and becomes a man first with this new birth: for before this he was by means of his abominable sins with Nebuchadnezzar, like a beast, and with the hypocritical Pharisees, a serpent, and an offspring of vipers, Matt. xxiii. 33, but especially because the person who is converted is renewed after his new head: the new or second Adam "Christ is formed in him," Gal. iv. 9. He is "the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus," Eph. ii. 10. See this clearly asserted 1 Cor. xv. 47—49.

This new man, created after God, was alive in man before the fall, but died through sin; but Christ having slain sin, quickeneth the new man again after his image. "This quickening," saith the instructor, "is a sincere joy of heart in God through Christ." The person who is converted, impressed with a sense of guilt, as well as of filthy uncleanness, (a) flees out of himself through and in Christ.

whom he embraceth and accepts, to God, upon his call, for reconciliation and grace. And thus conversion is faith, whereby we turn unto God through Christ, who for this end calls unto sinners, "Turn unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." And Jer. iii. 20. "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." Upon which the converts, betaking themselves to the Lord, cry out, "Behold, here we are, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God." (b) Hence proceeds "that sincere joy in God through Christ," for whereas sin and the world were before this the delight of the sinner, now he is converted, God in Christ is become his delight: the sinner chooses God in Christ, and makes him the object of all his joy and gladness, that he may find his delight in him. God may "increase the corn and wine of the wicked," but if he will only "lift up the light of his countenance upon him," he hath "more joy in his heart, than the wicked" on account of all their advantages; thus speaks David, Psalm iv. 6, 7, 8, "God himself is his exceeding joy," Psalm xliii. 4. "He desires nothing in heaven or on earth besides the Lord," like Asaph, Psalm lxxiii. 25. (c) God sheds sometimes upon this his love, and with his love a heartfelt joy by his Spirit into the soul; either by assuring her that her sins are forgiven her, "witnessing with her by his Spirit that she is a child of God," Rom. viii. 16; or by giving her that tranquil peace, and calmness, "that peace of God which passeth all understanding and which keepeth the heart and mind," Philip. iv. 7. Before this, "sin was continually before her eyes" to affright her, as David complains, Psalm li. 3. but now it is cast into the bottomless sea of God's mercy, and is not found any more, though sought for ever so diligently, Jer. l. 20; or by impressing a powerful sense of pardon on the soul, as with a seal, and suggesting those heartravishing words "son daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee," which induceth her to say triumphantly with Hezekiah, Isaiah xxxviii. 16, 17, "O Lord, by these things do men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: for thou hast loved my soul, and cast all my sins behind thy back." With the jailer, the soul "rejoices, that she believes in God" Acts xvi. 34. She makes her boast in the Lord, and answers the charges of her accusers with the blood and death of Christ. See Isaiah l. 8, 9. Rom. viii. 33, 34. It is true the Lord doth not always give the converted soul such an assurance and joy; but it is nevertheless certain, that the soul turns herself to him by faith with a ready mind, makes him the only object of her joy, and seeks that gladness in God; upon which the Lord revives the soul now and then, and more or less.

Can it now be otherwise, but that this new man should have "a love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works?" No; for the law of God is writ en in his heart; the love of Christ constraineth him, and the eyes of his understanding are enlightened, he looks upon holiness and good works as beams of the divine glory, though before this he considered them as trifles and follies: with joy "he esteems all the precepts of God concerning all things to be right," like David, Psalm cxix. 128. He says with Paul, Rom. vii. 12, The law is holy: and the commandment holy, and just, and good. "He dedicates himself willingly to the Lord, and engages, yea, "swears that he will keep God's righteous judgments, and he will also perform it," with David, Psalm cxix. 106. He sighs to the Lord for strength and ability: "O," saith he, "that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes," vrs. 5. He also actually sets about his duty, yea, "he makes haste and delays not to keep God's commandments," like that fervent man, vrs. 60. His conversion works also this "vehement desire and carefulness," in him, according to the text. He "hath also a delight in this after the inward man," with that holy apostle, Rom. vii. 22. Like king David, "he rejoices in the way of God's testimonies more than in all riches," Psalm cxix 14, and with him, he takes them as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of his heart," vrs. 3

In this manner is the new man, before lead, quickened in the converted sinner. He becomes another man, a new creature: is united to God, as to his soul; he lives also otherwise than he was used to do before this: he reckons himself to be dead unto sin; but alive unto God, Rom. vi. 11. This is his element, and the life of his life.

This conversion is ascribed to God: "God giveth repentance unto life," Acts xi. 18. It is also ascribed to man: "At Antioch a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord," Acts. xi. 21: for "God works both to will and to do" in man, Philip ii. 13, whereby man also wills and works, God converts man, and man also converts himself: "Turn me, and I shall be turned," saith the church, Jer. xxxi. 3. Lam. v. 21. The sinner doth not prevent God, but God prevents the sinner, with the work of conversion; yea, in the beginning of conversion God works alone without man, inasmuch as man is blind, and therefore wholly passive here; but in the progress of conversion man works also, because God causeth him to work. And therefore we distinguish conversion into a first and second, and a daily conversion. The first conversion is that by which a man passeth out of the state of nature into the state of grace: so

"God commandeth all men every where to repent," Acts xvii. 30. This conversion is also called regeneration: the second conversion is that by which a converted person rises up after a grievous fall, with Peter, Luke xxii. 32, 62. The daily conversion takes place every day, when a person rises up from his continual stumblings, and bestirs himself repeatedly to "follow after perfection," with Paul, Philip. iii. 12, 14, whereby "the inward man is renewed day by day," 2 Cor. iv. 16

II. He who is converted in this manner must also do works worthy of conversion. The sinner, estranged from God, and blind before his conversion, knows not what conversion is, nor what good works are. With the Papists he will esteem certain superstitious practices, in which he engages with a religious intention, extraordinary holiness; and with the Pelagians or Semipelagians he will wonder at himself, when he performs certain moral duties; but after he is converted, the eyes of his understanding are enlightened, and he will say with the instructor, "Those only are good works which proceed from a right faith," &c. We will explain this somewhat more particularly.

We must know previously that some works are good, and have these qualifications from their own nature, and so cannot be evil. thus it is with saving faith in Christ, hope in God through Christ, the love of God, and the love of our neighbour, proceeding from the love of God; these are indeed fruits of the Spirit, as Paul saith Gal. v. 22, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness faith meekness. temperance." Other works are materially good, but without these qualifications evil to wit, outward moral duties. The Pharisees seemed to have many good works; but inasmuch as those works had not these good qualifications, the Saviour expresseth repeatedly his detestation of them. See Mat. xxiii. 13—36. Luke xviii. 10, 11, 12, 14. There are also works which are in themselves indifferent, or neither good nor evil, as eating and drinking of this or that kind of food, following this or that calling; but they become evil. when they are not performed with these qualifications, and good when they are accompanied with them. And thus we must "do all things by faith in the name of Jesus," agreeably to Coll. iii. 17, according to the law of God, "doing the will of God from the heart," Eph. vi. 5, 6, and "to his glory," 1 Cor. x. 31.

1. Therefore if works shall be good, they must in the first place "proceed from a true faith;" "The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith un

feigned," 1 Tim. i. 5. Faith makes the heart good, and therefore the works which proceed from such a heart, also agreeable to God; for "the heart is purified by faith," Acts xv. 6. And therefore "whatsoever is not of faith is sin," Rom. xiv. 13, and "without faith it is impossible to please God," Heb. xi. 6. Many know indeed that good works must proceed from faith, but they know not how they proceed from it; the matter is thus, good works proceed from faith (a) when they are performed by a true believer If a man's doings shall please God, his person must first please him: "The Lord had respect" first "to Abel, and" then "to his offering," as Moses relateth, Gen. iv. 4, 5. Even "the sacrifice, the way, and the ploughing of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord; but the prayer of the upright is his delight," saith the wise man, Prov xv. 8, 9. xxxi. 4. They are the "peculiar people" of Jesus, who are "zealous of good works," Titus ii. 14. But how do we become his peculiar people and united to him? do we not by faith, we are taught this, Song ii. 16 John i. 12. Eph. iii. 17. (b) Good works are also performed from faith, when they are done by the power and influence of Christ: "Without him," and his influence, "we can do nothing," according to John xv. 45. But how shall we obtain his influence? surely by faith only: for we thereby "receive of his fulness, and grace for grace," John i. 12, 16, and we "do thus all things in word and deed in the name of the Lord Jesus," as Paul commands, Coll iii. 17. (c) We do good works also from faith, when we do them with an assured mind, that they are the will of God, and pleasing to him, and thus as the will of God, and in obedience to him: therefore the apostle of the Gentiles saith, Rom. xiv. 22, 23, "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned, if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin,"

2. And so they are performed according to the law of the Lord," which is necessary, if the works shall be good: for the law is the rule of good works; the Lord God also directs man to his law, that he may regulate himself in all that he doth according to it: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them," Isaiah viii. 20. He alone is the lawgiver, who can save and destroy, and therefore he alone can determine and prescribe what he will have his reasonable creatures to do and omit. To behave as a man thinks fit, with the Papists, may please the man himself, but it will not the Lord; for then God is rejected, man becomes his own lawgiver, and he

may commit the greatest abominations with a good design to serve God; "Whosoever killeth you will think that he doth God service," saith the Saviour to his apostles, John xvi. 2. Yea, we perform then a detestable "will worship," tending only "to the satisfying of the flesh," Col. ii. 23. As we cannot make laws for ourselves, so we cannot for others; "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," saith the Lord, Isaiah xxix. 13. Matt. xv. 9. Though a thing be ever so indifferent, yea, ever so good, it still "perisheth with the using," if it be introduced "after the commandments and doctrines of men," as Paul speaks, Col ii. 22. We must be servants of God, and not of men, according to 1 Cor. vii. 23. We shall not "be judged" by the law of men, but "by the law of God," James ii. 12.

3. No work, which is done from faith, and according to the law of God, can be pleasing to him, "unless it be done also to the glory of God." The Lord hath made all things, and especially the reasonable creature, for himself, and for his glory: therefore it becomes the reasonable creature to direct all things to his glory. The Lord is the most glorious being: it is therefore proper that his creature should acknowledge this in all that he doth, "whether he eat, or whether he drink, or whatever else he do," 1 Cor. x. 31. When a man aims at himself, he puts himself in the place of God. It is true we must do good works, that we may gain our neighbour for Christ, but this issues in the glory of the Lord. See Matt. v. 16. We must not always disapprove of believers aiming at their own profit and pleasure; for the Lord himself excites and urgeth his people sometimes by these things, Gen. xv. 1, and they also suffer themselves to be moved thereby. See this in the virgins of Jesus, and in Moses, Song i. 4. Heb. xi. 26. It is also nearly impossible that unexperienced Christians who have but little knowledge of divine truths, should begin all that they do from a direct view to the glory of God; their own salvation, advantage and pleasure will excite them most, and they end thus in the glory of the Lord, since the glory of God is their salvation, and their salvation is the glory of God; when "God satisfieth their souls as with marrow and fatness, then their mouths praise him with joyful lips," Psalm lxviii. 5. And so the Lord obtains his end, to wit, his glory, and he esteems such a work good.

APPLICATION.

Do these qualifications render the works of men good, can then the virtues of the heathens be good works. as the patrons of free-will imagine? They had not surely a true faith; did they possess the law of nature, how was it obscured and effaced by their blindness, corruption and evil practices! was it not their own honour, the reputation that they were wise and virtuous, that urged them on? For, "when they knew God," saith Paul, Rom. i. 21, 22, "they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but they became vain in their imaginations. and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." But we need not wonder that persons, who speak so highly of the powers of free-will, look upon the virtues of the heathens to be good works; for even their own virtues are no better than heathenish morality, the offspring of the corrupt will, and only tricked up with the name of Christian virtues and of faith. The Papists, who value themselves wonderfully upon their good works, have made good works of the most fantastical things; performing pilgrimages, going barefoot, not sparing the body, but scourging it, making monastic vows, yea, doctrines of devils, forbidding to marry, and abstaining from certain meats, these are reckoned not only good works, but even supererogatory good. But these things cannot be done from faith, to the glory of God, nor according to his law. God doth not require them at the hands of any man, he detests them: "In vain," saith the Saviour, "do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," Mat. xv. 9. Our church speaks with more sincerity and truth of good works, and hath therefore the surest evidence, that she thinks rightly, more especially as she speaks according to the word of God.

Will it now suffice, that we have contemplated this matter, as a truth, without respect to ourselves? must we not also apply it to ourselves? It concerns us greatly, whether we also be converted or not. It is certain, that all who are present here are not converted, nor all unconverted. Many feed upon ashes, a deceived heart turns them aside, so that they cannot deliver themselves, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand? They ween that they are converted, but the old man hath never yet been mortified in them, nor

the new man quickened. Others think that they are not yet converted, because they experience so great a power of the body of death in themselves, although they are truly partakers of grace. It is therefore necessary, that each one should consider his ways, and examine himself whether he be truly converted or not. But before we hold the light to you, that ye may see yourselves by it, we will discover to you the false evidences, which disturb or quiet the converted and the unconverted improperly.

It is surely no evidence of conversion, (a) that a person is able to mention the time, when he had certain emotions of painful sorrow on account of sin, of delightful joy, and an inclination to that which is good; for these things are not accompanied in all men with conversion; they are surely not always the beginning of conversion. (b) The severity and the duration of the convictions, which a person hath once had, are also no evidences that he is converted. It appears from experience, that some are converted without any grievous distress of mind; that others do not continue long under severe convictions, and that there are those also, who partake of converting grace from their youth; and some are converted by a calm contemplation of the truth, yea, even with a sweet joy, as we have shown upon the twenty-fifth Lord's day. On the other hand, reprobates, such as Cain, Saul, Ahab and Judas, experience sometimes severe convictions. (c) Neither may we look upon it as an evidence of true conversion, that a person is more virtuous in some respects than others; many are civil, honest, and exceedingly devout, but their heart is and continues rotten, like the heart of the Pharisee, who thanked God that he was more virtuous than other men, Luke xviii. 11, 12. As it is also no evidence of an unconverted state, that a person still experienceth a great power of the old man in himself; for we should then be obliged to condemn Paul, who bewailed himself greatly on this account, Rom. vii. (d) It is still less a true evidence, that a person is converted or unconverted, because eminently godly persons approve or condemn him. Paul, though he was converted, was at first suspected by the Christians, Acts ix. 26, and without doubt Judas, Simon the sorcerer, and Demas were looked upon by many, as converted.

A better and a surer evidence of conversion (a)is the work of conversion itself, as explained above. The converted have a sincere sorrow of heart for their sins, they hate them more than aught besides, they are afraid of them, and endeavour to flee from them. God and his service are the objects of their joy, delight and love. It is true, some are converted without such a grievous sorrow, but they will nevertheless be

sorry, and mourn on account of their daily offences. Do they not obtain much joy from the Lord, they cannot, nevertheless, delight themselves in sin, and out of the Lord: their continual turning to the Lord manifests that they seek their rest in him only. Are they sometimes listless with respect to the service of the Lord, it is a burthen to them, and they endeavour again and again to enliven themselves. True conversion discovereth itself still more (*c*) by the work of faith; faith and conversion always accompany each other. See Mark i. 15. Acts xi. 21. They who are converted, actually pass by faith out of themselves into the Lord, in order that they may obtain in and with him grace, reconciliation, pardon and sanctification; with the prodigal son "they arise, go to their Father," confess their sins, and entreat him for grace, Luke xv. 18, 19 Yea, they engage in a solemn manner to serve him, they "join themselves to him to serve him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants," Isaiah xlv. 5. lvi. 5. We add to this (*c*) Their sorrow for sin as sin. It grieves them that they have deserved damnation; but they see also so much shame and filth in their inquity, that they hide themselves for shame, "they loathe themselves," Ezek. xxxvi. 31, and they "dare not lift up their face to God," Ezra ix. 6. They hate sin and flee from it, because it is sin. Although sin were not punished, they would, on account of its hatefulness, still hate it, flee from it, and cast it away, as a menstruous cloth," Isaiah xxx 22. Once more, (*d*) They are converted from every sin to every good work, that God hath commanded: "They have a delight," saith the instructor, "to live according to the will of God in all good works." There is not one sin, great or small, though ever so honourable, pleasant and profitable to the flesh, from which they do not turn away, and which they do not hate and strive against: there is not one commandment of God, to which they do not submit themselves with delight and willingly: their heart saith with David, Psalm cxix. 128. "I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way." Suffer me to add yet; (*e*) They who are converted are not satisfied with merely amending their actions, forsaking that which is evil, and doing that which is good; but they attend also to their hearts, that they likewise may be amended, converted and changed. They see that their understanding is darkened, they endeavour to enlighten it, that they may see the light in God's light; conversion is indeed "a turning from darkness to light," Acts xxvi. 18. They see that their will with its motions and desires is stubborn, crooked and perverse; they endeavour to subdue, to renew and direct it according to the will of

God, and thus " to make themselves a new heart and a new spirit," according to Ezek. xviii 31. They find that they have no strength to do aught, and especially none to change their hearts ; therefore they turn themselves to the Lord, and cry with David, Psalm li 10. " Create in me a clean heart, O God ; and renew a right spirit within me," And thus with king Josiah, 2 Kings xxiii. 25. " They turn to the Lord with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their might, according to all the law of Moses "

What think ye hearers ? do ye all answer this description ? Surely ye do not, who have not yet striven to be converted, but are and remain careless and listless : earthly, visible and sinful objects possess you altogether : Evil is still sweet in your mouths, ye hide it under your tongues, ye spare it, and forsake it not," as Zophar speaks, Job xx. 12, 13. What will it avail you to perform certain works of honesty and religion, and to prink yourselves with them, while your hearts are unconverted, and your works have not the requisite qualifications ? " Your webs will not become garments, neither will ye be able to cover yourselves with your works : your works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in your hands," as it is said, Isaiah lix. 5. Or do ye flatter yourselves, that ye will convert yourselves some time or other hereafter. Alas, how do ye deceive yourselves ! how long do ye expect to live ? " Thou fool," perhaps " this night thy soul will be required of thee," as the Saviour spake, Luke xii. 20. Or do ye hope to repent on your death-beds ? will ye be abler then, than ye are now ? no, your deadly sickness will not suffer your souls to repent, and will perhaps so stupify your understandings, that ye will be forced to die as a fool dieth. Or is it your hope, that ye will live yet some time ? will ye have then more time and inclination, and less to do in the world than ye have now ? will the door of grace be then still open, and God stand ready to receive you, as soon as ye call, when ye have rejected him so long, in opposition to all his calls ? He saith no, Prov. i. 24, 28. Do ye defer your conversion until another time, it is to be feared, that God will punish you then with judicial blindness and hardness, which will render you incapable of conversion. See this threatened, Isaiah iv. 9, 10.

" Seek then the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.' Thus the Lord calleth to you, Isaiah lv. 6, 7. Delay not by any means, but as David saith, " To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden

not your hearts," Psalm xcv. 7, 8. There is surely nothing, in which ye have a greater concern than conversion. Have ye not departed from God, and from a most glorious condition? Will ye not then return? "Shall they fall, and not arise? shall he turn away, and not return? saith the Lord," Jer. viii. 4. "Or do ye despise the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth you to repentance?" or will ye, "after your hardness and impenitent hearts, treasure up to yourselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?" as the apostle speaks, Rom. ii. 4, 5. Or are ye indifferent whether ye be saved or damned? or do ye not endeavour to be converted, because ye cannot convert yourselves? This doth not hinder you, for God gives you not only the word, and time to repent, but often his Spirit also to convince you, and he stirs you up repeatedly by your conscience, and thus gives you strength; but ye withstand his Spirit, and therefore it is your will that hinders you; "Ye will not come to Christ, that ye may have life," as he himself saith, John v. 4. Or dare ye not turn to God, because ye have sinned so grievously, and so long a time against him? He calls to you still, yea, he swears, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. "That he hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

Only consider and say, "What have I done?" Jer. viii. 6. A person will never repent, until he first comes to himself and sees his abominable disposition and dreadful situation; for this drives him out of himself to the Lord. "When we fear, then we come to the Lord and to his goodness; and when we acknowledge our offence, and are in affliction, then we seek his face early," Hosea iii. 5. v. 15. Abide by all means under a zealous ministration of the word of conversion; "God gives thereby repentance unto life." "When they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Thus speaks Luke of the pentecost hearers, Acts ii. 27. Above all, pray earnestly and incessantly to God, that he would convert you, with the church, who said repeatedly, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned," Jer xxxi 18. Lam. v. 21. And flee to his Son, "who is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins," Acts. v. 31.

But ye who are converted, (a) Glory and rejoice in the grace which hath been shown to you; others glory and rejoice in you. See Acts xi. 18. xv. 3. 1 Thess. i. 9. Why should not then ye

yourselves, whom it concerns more than others? (b) Conduct yourselves as it becometh those who are converted: show that the Lord is the God of your exceeding joy; and that it is truly your desire and delight to live according to the will of God, in all good works, that "ye are dead" to yourselves, and to all that is sinful, and that "your life is hid with Christ in God," as Paul speaks, Col. iii. 3. Therefore he commands you, "Yield not your members instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead; and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God," Rom. vi. 13. "Bring forth then fruits meet for repentance," as the Baptist admonisheth, Matt. iii 3. It behooves you to take particular care, that your works be not only materially good, but also that they have the requisite qualifications. It is commendable to hear the word of God, but it is detestable to hear it without fruit; therefore the Saviour saith, Luke viii. 18, "Take heed how ye hear." "Whatever we do in word or work," we must do it in faith, "in the name of the Lord Jesus," as Paul admonisheth, Col iii. 17. "Servants must be obedient to their masters, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." Eph. vi. 5, 6, 7. And every one ought to conduct himself thus in all that he doth, yea, he ought to "eat and drink to the glory of God," 1 Cor. x. 31. This would add a comely lustre to the converted people. (c) We exhort you further from Heb xii. 15, "Look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God," either through a common sluggishness, by which we are brought to a deep decay: or by some enormous sin, which disturbs the mind. How shameful, hurtful and painful this is, we have shown on the foregoing Lord's day, and also that those who have backslidden thus, should return. (d) We would add finally, "Do ye, who are converted, strengthen your brethren," as Jesus enjoins, Luke xxii. 32. There are weak and feeble ones; ye know the temper of their minds, and how ye have been restored. Encourage them, support, direct, and "comfort them with the comfort wherewith ye yourselves have been comforted of God," as Paul speaks, 2 Cor. i. 4. We should also seek by word and conversation to convert those who are wholly unconverted, as we have shown on the former Lord's day.

Do ye bemoan yourselves with Ephraim on account of your manifold sins, the Lord hears it, he is pleased with it, and he will show you that he is, saying, Jer. xxxi. 20, "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him: I

will surely have mercy on him." Will he not, like the father of the prodigal son, when his son repented, Luke xv. 17—24 "run to meet you, fall on your neck, kiss you, clothe you with the best robe," and feast you with the choicest dainties? According to his promises, Hosea xiv. 4. "he will heal your backslidings, he will love you freely; for his anger is turned away from you." The Lord promiseth, Isa. xxxv. 10, (It is partly fulfilled, but it will be perfectly fulfilled after this life) "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and cōme to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Amen.

THE

LAW OF GOD,

AND THE

FIRST COMMANDMENT EXPLAINED.

XXXIV. LORD'S DAY.

Exod. xx. 1, 2, 3. And God spake all these words saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Q. 92. *What is the law of God?*

A. "God spake all these words," Exod. xx. Deut. v. "saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

The first Commandment,

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

The second Commandment.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image," &c.

Q. 93. *How are these commandments divided?*

A. Into two tables, the first of which teaches us how we must behave toward God; the second, what duties we owe to our neighbour,

Q. 94. What doth God enjoin in the first command?

A. That I, as sincerely as I desire the salvation of my own soul, avoid and flee from all idolatry, sorcery, soothsaying, superstition, invocation of saints, or any other creatures, and learn rightly to know the only true God; trust in him alone, with humility and patience submit to him, expect all good things from him only; love, fear, and glorify him with my whole heart; so that I renounce and forsake all creatures, rather than commit the least thing contrary to his will.

Q. 95. What is idolatry?

A. Idolatry is instead of, or besides that one true God, who has manifested himself in his word, to contrive or have any other object in which men place their trust.

NOTHING is more generally known in the world, than that there is a Supreme Being, and that he ought to be worshipped. It is indeed innate in man. Paul teacheth us this, when he saith, Rom. i. 19, 20, "That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." Yea, all nations, even the most illiterate declare it by their religious worship. But what, and who that Supreme Being is, and how he ought to be worshipped, is not so well known to all; for many have worshipped an unknown God, with the Athenians, Acts xvii. 23. He had indeed not revealed to them either himself or his will, according to which he must be worshipped: "In times past he suffered all the Gentiles to walk in their own ways," Acts xiv. 16. It is true, "the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law; and these, not having the law, are a law unto themselves, inasmuch as they show the work of the law written in their hearts," according to Rom. ii. 14, 15. But who knows not that this light is in them like darkness itself? it is indeed exceedingly beclouded and obscured by their natural depravity; and by indulging their lusts their foolish hearts have become "still more darkened," as Paul speaks, Rom. i. 21. Have not all the heathen nations manifested this in those practices, by which they served their gods? have not all their religious ceremonies been mere follies? Therefore the Lord God not having created all the children of men in vain, but willing that some of them should, as his peculiar people, know and serve him aright, it behooved him to re-

veal himself and his will to them. The foreign nations, who were transplanted into the possession of the Israelites, knew how necessary this was; for when "they were plagued with lions, because they feared not the God of the land, they desired to have one of the Israelitish priests, in order that he might teach them the manner of the God of the land," 2 Kings xvii. 25—27. As the Lord also hath not left himself without a witness in this respect: he did not indeed show all nations this favour, but only that people whom he had separated for himself: "He showed his word unto Jacob; his statutes and his judgments unto Israel: he dealt not so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they knew them not," Psalm cxlvii. 19, 20. For this purpose he conducted Israel from among the nations into the wilderness, that he might, when they were separated from all other families, speak comfortably to them, and declare that he was their covenant God, and teach them how they ought to conduct as his people; for, as the text saith, "God spake all these words," &c.

The instructor having taught in the foregoing question, that good works must be done according to the law of God, explains now, and in the sequel of the catechism, what law God hath given to his people, whom he hath delivered, (1) In general, Q. 92, 93. (2) With respect to each commandment in particular, Q. 94—113, and (3) how even those who are converted are not able to keep this law perfectly.

We must attend at present,

I. To the giving of the law, Q. 93.

II. The division of it. Q. 93. and

III. The sense of the first commandment, Q. 94, 95.

I. I will not attempt to explain the reason why the law is called by the Hebrews, *thorah*, an instruction, direction; by the Greeks, *nomos*, from *nemein*, to give each one his due; by the Latins, *lex*, from *legere*, to read, and by us, *wet*, from *weeten*, to know. Neither will we inquire how many different titles are given to this law in the word of God, as testimonies, judgments, commandments, &c. nor why the word law sometimes denotes the whole doctrine of salvation, Psalm i. 2. and particularly the gospel of fulfilment, Isaiah ii. 3. at other times all the books of the old testament, John xii. 34. as the books of Moses, John viii. 5. the Psalms, John x. 34. compare with Psalm lxxxii. 6. and John xv. 25. with Psalm xxxv. 19. lxix. 4, the prophets, 1 Cor. xvi. 21, with Isaiah xxviii. 11. The word law denotes also the covenant of works, Rom. iii. 27. But it will suffice to say, that we speak here of the law, as the rule of our conduct. We have shewn on the second Lord's day, that

there was an ecclesiastical law, or a law of ceremonies, a civil law, and a moral law. We speak here, as all know, of the moral law, the everlasting rule of all our actions.

J. In order to understand the nature of this law, we must consider the preface, the contents, and the scope of it. Moses, the leader of Israel, describing the giving of the law, saith, "God spake all these words." The words that God spake, are emphatically called, "the ten words."* Deut. iv. 13, which are certainly the ten commandments, although proposed for the most part in a paraphrastic manner, and not so much the promises and threatenings, with which the ten commandments are enforced, and which God spake, as pertaining to the commandments. This law was not pronounced before the whole world, but only from mount Sinai or Horeb, in the wilderness of Arabia, before all Israel, in the presence, and by the ministry of many "thousands of angels," Deut. xxxiii. 2, on the fiftieth day after the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, "four hundred and thirty years" after the promise to Abraham, Gal. iii. 17. It was nevertheless not Moses, who pronounced it, although he also may be called the law-giver, since the law was delivered by his ministry to Israel, Numb. xxi. 18. Deut. xxxiv. 21. He doth not however assume this high authority to himself, but it was God who pronounced the law; the burning, smoking and quaking mountain, the dreadful thunderings, the gleaming flashes of lightning, and other fearful tokens manifested that God was come down, and that he himself spoke after his manner with power, that he might convince the people of his high sovereignty, might cause them to quake at his presence, and fear to transgress his law; as the people also, terrified by those appearances, were persuaded that God spake, and obligated themselves to obey him, Exod. xix. 16—19, xx. 18, 19, 20. It was nevertheless not to destroy Israel, for it was the second Person, the Son of God, who spoke to them, as the Mediator of the covenant, who had the law within his heart, that he might satisfy the vindictive justice of God, according to the law, for the true Israel. The Father was, according to the distribution of the gifts and graces among the divine Persons, indeed the law-giver; nevertheless the Son spake in his name, the angel of God's presence; who led the Israelites out of Egypt to the land of Canaan, whose voice they were obliged to obey, Exod. xxix. 20—23. "He was the angel who spake in the church in the wilderness with Mo-

* In the original, and in the Dutch translation. From this expression of the ten words, the ten commandments are often called the decalogue.

ses, and with their fathers in the mount Sinai," according to the declaration of Stephen, Acts vii. 38. It was "his voice which then shook the earth," as Paul saith, Heb. xii. 26. Yet God did not only speak these words, but he also wrote them on two tables of stone, not with outstanding, but with incarved and engraven letters, "on both sides: the tables were the work of God, the writing was also the writing of God, graven upon the tables," Exod. xxxii. 15, 16. This represented the everlasting duration of the law, the stony hearts of the Israelites, and the manner in which God himself would write his law in them, according to the covenant, Jer. xxxi. 33. 2 Cor. iii. 2, 3. But after Israel had committed idolatry with the golden calf, and had broken the covenant of God, Moses broke the tables also, Exod. xxxii. 19. But the Lord, turning from the fierceness of his anger, and being reconciled to the people, restored the broken law, not by making other tables himself; but, that there might remain a testimony of the abominable action of the Israelites for their humiliation, he ordered Moses to hew two other tables, like the first, and he wrote himself the former words in them, Exod. xxxiv. 1.

Before the Lord delivers his commandments, he prefixes his preface to them, in order that he may teach the Israelites their obligation to keep the commandments of the Lord. He saith to them, "I am the Lord," *Jehovah*, the selfexisting, the alone-existing, the everlasting, unchangeable, faithful God, who will now fulfil my promises, which I made to your fathers, and show that I am the Jehovah. See Exod. vi. 2, who am also with this my name "the Most High over all the earth." Psalm lxxxiii. 18, to whom ye are therefore obligated in the strongest manner. They are obligated to him so much the more, as he had declared that he was their God, "I am the Lord thy God," saith he. The Lord was their God by virtue of the covenant made with Abraham and his seed, Gen. xviii. 7. He had nothing greater than himself, he could not therefore bestow a greater good upon them than himself; whatever he was, had, and did, was theirs. It was therefore just that they should conduct themselves as his people, according to his law; it was for this that he was become their God, and they his people, as Moses declares, Deut. xxvii. 17, 18. The Lord had also manifested himself as their God, when "he led them out of the land of Egypt." They had suffered grievously in the land of Egypt, it had been a house of bondage to them, an iron furnace: but the Lord had delivered them, and had led them out of Egypt with great power, and with an outstretched arm, with many mighty tokens and wonders, and he was

now about to lead them into Canaan, as the pledge of the covenant, and in order to prove that he was their God, according to the promise of the covenant, made to Abraham, Gen. xv. 18. xvii. 8. Did it not then behoove them to acknowledge this, and, as the people, whom the Lord owned, to conform themselves in every respect to his law? It is silly to infer hence with the Antinomians and others, that the law of Moses doth not relate to us, because we have not been led out of Egypt, like the Israelites; for it is the law which floweth from the supremacy of God, as Jehovah: is he now less the God of his people than he was in the time of Moses? hath not the Lord now also brought his people out of the spiritual Egypt, the house of Satan and of Antichrist? are not all the commandments moral? do they not require love to God and to our neighbour? "Jesus came not to destroy the law: not one jot nor tittle may pass from the law." See Matt. xv. 17—20. The fifth commandment hath respect to Canaan, but Paul shows that it relates to us also, Eph. vi. 1, 2, 3. If the law pertain not to us, because we were not brought out of the land of Egypt, then it also relates to them only, who were personally brought out, and not to the following generations. We will not attempt to refute their objections; we have done this on the thirty-second Lord's day.

2. The great Lawgiver hath proposed the duty of his people in a few words: but Paul exhibits by the Spirit of the Lord, the sum of the law, in still fewer, when he comprehends it in one word, "love," Rom. xiii. 9, 10. The law is nevertheless, not on this account defective, but the more perfect, because it must be taken in its whole extent: "I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad," saith David, Psalm cxix. 96. It must therefore be explained (a) spiritually; for "the law is spiritual," as Paul speaks, Rom. vii. 14. When it forbids open murder and adultery, then it forbids also the hatred of the heart, and the adulterous eye, according to 1 John iii. 15. Matt. v. 28. (b) Whenever aught is forbidden, we must consider that then also something is commanded. Doth the first commandment forbid having other gods before God, it doth then also command us to hold and acknowledge him only to be God. And when any thing is commanded, we must know that something is then also forbidden, as in the fourth and fifth commandments. (c) When any sins are forbidden, or any virtue commanded, then also the causes and consequences of such a sin or virtue are forbidden or commanded. "Thou shalt not steal," saith the Lawgiver: but he forbids with this also covetousness and wasting our goods.

Therefore the law is perfect, and it doth not need any amendment nor addition, as the Socinians imagine, that they may represent Christ as a new lawgiver, and may seek justification by the law of Christ. But do they not show hereby, that they are self-condemned, since they are unable to maintain their opinion without reproaching the law of God, and saying that it is not perfect, contrary to so many testimonies of the word of God? See Psalm xix. and Psalm cxix. And what should the Lord Jesus forsooth have added to the law of God? the command of self-denial, of taking up our cross and following him? Might men then, before the coming of Christ, neglect self-denial? might his people indulge fretfulness, when he subjected them to adversity? and was he not then also a pattern for their imitation? See how the Levites denied themselves, according to the commandment of God, Exod. xxxii 26—29. Deut. xxxiii. 9, how the afflicted people bowed patiently under the burthen, Lam. iii. 26—30 Micha vii. 9, and how the Lord requireth that Israel should imitate him in his holiness, Lev. xix. 2. When Christ said repeatedly, "ye have heard that it was said by them of old; but I say unto you." Matt. v. 21—48, he doth not speak thus in order to amend the law, but to rescue it from the false glosses of the elders, who imagined that none other than outward actions were forbidden or commanded: in opposition to which Christ declares the spiritual and true meaning of the law. The Papists trifle, when they speak of evangelical counsels, as the monastic vows of a single life, implicit obedience, and voluntary poverty: these things they imagine, are not commanded, but only advised, as means of obtaining a greater reward. Truly mere fictions beside the word of God, and condemned in that word, as will-worship. We cannot busy ourselves with them here.

3. But what is the design of the law, and for what purpose hath God given it? Some suppose that the Lord gave it to be a form, a scheme, a transcript or prescript of the covenant of grace, and that it is therefore nothing else but the covenant of grace itself, requiring and teaching faith in Christ, and that it is therefore called "the law of faith," Rom. iii. 7. But that when Moses had broken the first two tables, on account of the sin committed with the golden calf, and had afterwards brought other tables to the Lord, who wrote the former law on them again, that then the law assumed, as a punishment of that sin, the form of the covenant of works, with the addition of the demand and curse of the covenant of works, "do this and live, and cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them," Lev. xvii. 5. Deut. xxvii. 26.

See Rom. x. 5. Gal. iii. 10. But we cannot accede to this opinion, because this law contains only commandments, and no promises of affording strength and ability for enabling us to keep it, as the covenant of grace doth, Exod. xxxvi 26, 27. The same words cannot exhibit such different forms, now of a covenant of grace, and then of a covenant of works. The second giving of the law was not a punishment of the sin with the golden calf, but it proceeded from "special kindness as well as the first giving; for after the first tables of the law were broken, God did not give his law the second time, until he was reconciled to the people, upon the intercession of Moses. See Exod. xxxii. xxxiii. xxxiv. Is there a sentence and a promise of the covenant of grace in the preface, and in the second commandment of the law, the law is not therefore the covenant of grace itself; for that sentence and promise is also in the law, which was given the second time. There is a threatening of the covenant of works in the second commandment, "that God will visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children," &c. but none may therefore say that the law is nothing else but a covenant of works. The Son of God, the Mediator of the covenant of grace, did indeed publish the law, but that doth not make it a covenant of grace; for he published the law upon other occasions, yea, as the demand of the covenant of works, although he was already revealed, as the Mediator of the covenant of grace. See Matt. xix. 16—20. Luke x. 25—28. It is true, the law is sometimes called the covenant of God, but who doth not know that the word covenant hath various significations? the steadfast order of nature is called God's covenant of the day and of the night." Jer. xxxiii. 20. So also God's steadfast promise is called a covenant, Exod. xxxiv. 17. Circumcision and the sabbath are styled God's covenant, Gen. xvii. 10. Exod. xxxi. 16. Thus also a command of the civil law, Jer. xxxiv. 13, 14. But none will look upon these things, each considered separately, as the covenant itself. In the same manner is the law also called the covenant of God, because it pertained to the covenant of God, established at Horeb, as a part of it, and so the law was, "the covenant of God, which he commanded them to perform," Deut. iv. 13. It was "after the tenor of these words," as the demand of the covenant, that "the Lord made the covenant with Israel," Exod. xxxiv. 17. Therefore we cannot call the law of the ten commandments "the law of faith;" for by "the law of faith," Rom. iii. 27, we must understand the gospel, which is also called "a law," Isaiah ii. 3, and is opposed by Paul to the law of works, Rom. iii. 27.

That we may apprehend the matter rightly, and perceive clearly what we must judge concerning this law, we must know that God established a covenant with Israel on Sinai by the ministry of Moses, and what kind of a covenant that was. It is abundantly evident from Exod. xix. that God established a covenant with all Israel upon Sinai; for God commands Moses, vrs. 5, 6, to propose the demand and promise of the covenant to Israel, when he saith, "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people; for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." Moses reports these words to the people, vrs. 7, and they consent to the proposal of God, when they say, vrs. 8, "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do." Behold here a solemn covenanting. Hereupon the people are prepared to receive the law of the covenant, and the Lord descends with the tokens of his awful majesty on the mountain to pronounce that law of his in the hearing of the people, Exod. xix. 9—25. He delivers in the first place the moral law, Exod. xx. and then the civil law, Exod. xxi. xxii. xxiii. although he inserts also in the civil law certain moral and ceremonial or ecclesiastical commands. Hereupon the people consent again to the covenant with all its laws, which Moses writes in a book, and confirms with burnt sacrifices and the sprinkling of blood, Exod. xxiv. And finally, the God of the covenant delivers to his covenant people the ceremonial or church-law; all which was concluded with the delivery of the two tables of stone of the covenant, in which the moral law, as the chief and fundamental part of all the laws, was engraven, Exod. xxv.—xxxi. But after the people had broken the covenant of God by their sin with the golden calf, Moses also broke the tables of the covenant, and God would destroy the people: but upon the intercession of Moses, he received them again into his favour, and into his covenant, Exod. xxxii. xxxiii. xxxiv. and he began to give his ecclesiastical laws again, which he had left off giving on account of the sin of his people.

From all this we may see clearly that the moral law was not a transcript nor prescript of any covenant, nor the other laws neither: but the moral law was with the other laws a rule for the covenant people, who were already in the covenant, that they might conduct themselves as God's covenant people, according to that rule, worthily of God and of his covenant.

If we will form a right idea of the proper nature of the law of that Mosaical covenant, we must then also rightly understand the

nature of the covenant, of which it was the law. Some call that covenant the legal covenant, which came in the stead of the covenant of nature. They imagine that the covenant of works promised the enjoyment of all good to soul and body in paradise, and not in heaven, in consequence of perfect obedience; and that the legal covenant at Sinai promised the enjoyment of eternal life in Canaan; which legal covenant they call a covenant of servitude, because it served indirectly and accidentally the covenant of grace. But this covenant hath been contrived without, and contrary to the word of God; it is not true, that God promised Adam that he should enjoy eternal life in Paradise; he promised him the enjoyment of eternal life in heaven, as we have proved on the second Lord's day. This legal covenant supposeth, contrary to the word of God, that the Israelites were able to keep the law of God perfectly, and that they were not worthy of death. According to this covenant, Israel would have been obliged to seek that eternal life in Canaan by their own doings, and thus their own righteousness by the law: and so this legal covenant would not have served to lead men to the covenant of grace, but to lead them from it, and, contrary to what Paul saith, Gal. iii. 21, "the law would have been against the promises."

Others will have that it was a national covenant, that is, a covenant made with a whole people, which required a sincere obedience, according to the moral law, with the promise of a reward in this life, and that to come; which was, notwithstanding, neither the covenant of grace, nor of works, but presupposed both; but the word national doth not describe nor explain the nature or kind of the covenant, but only saith that it was a covenant established with that nation and that people. If it should be rejoined, that it is neither the covenant of grace nor of works, the matter remains equally obscure: it is as though it were said, we have no offensive nor defensive alliance, or covenant, but an alliance with the nation or people of England. If it be said, that it was a covenant of sincere obedience, neither doth this define the nature of the covenant; for the covenants of works and of grace require also a sincere obedience. The covenant that requireth sincere obedience, with the promise of this life, and of that which is to come, is a covenant of works, or a covenant of grace.

Some think that it was a mixed covenant, composed of the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace; but then Israel would have been obliged to seek their righteousness by the covenant of works, and by the covenant of grace, contrary to Rom. xi. 6.

There are those also, who will have that it was an outward covenant, requiring an outward obedience, and promising outward bles-

sings in Canaan: which they also call a shadowy covenant, the name of which, the mutual relation, the treatment, the bestowing and receiving of the benefits, the covenant people, the promises that God would be the God of Israel, and would give them the land of Canaan, all God's dispensations toward, and his leadings of Israel were shadows and types of the covenant of grace, which God promised, Jer. xxxi. to establish with his elect Israel under the New Testament. Which covenant they suppose to be the only foundation of all the types of the Old Testament; but that this opinion also is not agreeable to the word of God, appears hence, that we may not pursue any outward blessing without the inward, and that God detests and condemns an outward obedience, which is not accompanied with the inward. See Isa. xxix. 13, 14. This opinion also contradicts itself; for a shadowy and typical covenant requires an inward obedience, and promiseth spiritual blessings, to which the shadows and types have respect, and they must therefere be improved by an inward obedience and faith, which looks steadfastly to the antitypes. If we make this Mosaic covenant the only ground of the types, we will then be obliged to reject many real types, as the sacrifices of the believing fathers before the time of Moses, Melchizedek, also circumcision with the passover, Israel's abode under the cloud, their passage through the red sea, the manna and the rock. All these things had place before the solemn covenanting at Horeb; and that these things were really types, this we have proved in our "Sketch of the system of types;" in which we have also shown, that it must follow from such an outward covenant, which was shadowy in all its circumstances, that many things, as the moral and civil law, ought to be considered as types, which were really no types. Was then the Mosaic covenant the covenant of works? it could not be that neither; for that cannot be established with any sinner, because the sinner is not able to assent to it, not to observe it, and because God cannot enter into a treaty of friendship with him, such as takes place in a covenant, unless he have a mediator of reconciliation, which the covenant of works doth not admit.

Since then the covenant, which was made at Sinai, was not a legal, servile covenant, nor a national covenant, distinct from the covenant of works and of grace, nor a mixed covenant, composed of the covenant of works and of grace, nor an outward, shadowy covenant, nor a covenant of works, it follows that it was the covenant of grace itself. That it was the covenant of grace itself is evident from the word of God; for it was the same covenant with that which God made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which was certainly the cove-

nant of grace, and the Mosaic covenant was only a solemn and national renewing of that covenant with all Israel (and so a national covenant of grace) and for the confirmation of the covenant of grace established with those fathers. This is evident from Deut. xxix. 10—15, where the covenant, which was made at Horeb, is renewed with all Israel, as Moses saith, "Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God—that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God—that he may establish thee to day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee," (to wit, at Horeb) "and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." We see here that God promiseth in the Mosaic covenant, to be the God of Israel, and that Israel should be his people. See also Deut. xxvi. 17, 18, 19. This promise was surely a promise of the covenant of grace, which God had established with the fathers of the Israelites. See Gen. xvii. 7. Yea; we see also in the words quoted from Deut. xxix that God promises to be the God of Israel, and admits them into the covenant of grace, for this end, even that he might confirm and fulfil to Israel the same promise of the covenant of grace, which he had promised and sworn to Abraham, in behalf of him and his seed. Was not the covenant made at Sinai the same then with the covenant of those fathers? We add further, to prove that the Mosaic covenant was the covenant of grace itself, that it was the same in substance with that which God makes with his chosen people, under the new testament; for the covenant made at Horeb, hath the same promises with the covenant under the New Testament: in this new covenant of the New Testament it is promised, "that the Lord will be the God of Israel, and that Israel shall be the people of God," Jer. xxxi. 33. This promise God makes in the Mosaic covenant also, Exod. xx 2. Deut. xxix. 13. In the covenant of grace under the New Testament it is promised, "that the Lord will walk in his people," 2 Cor. vi. 16, and this promise was also made in the Mosaic covenant; yea, in 2 Cor. vi. 16, it is assumed and cited out of this covenant. See this Exod. xxix. 45. Lev xxvi. 11, 12. The Israel of God under the New Testament is at this time by virtue of the covenant of grace, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood," &c. according to 1 Peter 11, 9. But the Israel of Moses's time, which entered not only outwardly, like the carnal Israelites, but also inwardly into the covenant at Horeb, this people was also "God's peculiar treasure, and a kingdom of priests," &c. according to Exod. xix. 5, 6. Once more, the covenant at Sinai was dedicated with the blood of beasts, offered up in sacrifice, and had a law of ceremonies for a rule of celebrating

the public worship, Exod xxiv. xxv. Now it is certain, that these things were types of Christ, the Mediator of the covenant of grace, and of his sufferings and benefits. See Heb. x. 15—23. Therefore Israel was obliged to look through all the sacrifices and bloodsheddings of the Mosaic covenant to the future sacrifice of Christ: did not these ceremonies of the Mosaic covenant belong then to the covenant of grace, and was not the Mosaic covenant then the same in substance with the covenant of grace?

It will now be easy to understand what was God's end in giving the law, and what we are to think of these ten commandments. (a) It is evident, that this law is not the covenant of grace itself, but a rule of life and of thankfulness to the covenant people of the covenant of grace that they may conduct themselves, according to it, worthily of God, who had so graciously admitted Israel into his covenant. For after God had proposed the covenant, and the people had consented to it, the Lord commanded Moses to prepare the people for receiving his law, Exod. xix. and he saith, Exod. xx. 2. "I am the Lord thy God," &c. and presently after this he delivers his commandments to them, as the God of Israel. Therefore the law is so often urged in the Old and New Testament, as such a rule, and is and remaineth always an everlasting rule of thankfulness to all the covenant people of God, as it is also proposed and explained by our instructor, in the third part of his catechism, as Paul hath also done, Rom. xii. xiii. (b) Though the Lord entered not into a covenant of works with the sinful Israel by this law, which was impossible, he nevertheless exhibited to Israel, when he gave them this law, the demand of the broken covenant of works, that he might teach those of them, who were sincere, from what they were delivered, and might convince, condemn, and induce the others to seek his grace; and the law serveth for this end still; for as Saul saith, Rom. v. 20, "The law entered, that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Therefore the Lord did also enforce this law, both with the promise of the covenant of works, "do this, and thou shalt live," Lev. xviii. 5, compared with Rom. x. 5, and also with the curse of that covenant, Deut. xxviii. 26, compared with Gal. iii. 10. This will not appear so strange, if we consider that the Lord Jesus himself proposed this law, as the demand of the covenant of works, Matt. xix. 16—21, as it is also proposed by the instructor in the doctrine of man's misery. (c) If we consider the law, as having a special relation to Israel, it appears then as imposing a legal administration upon the covenant of grace: God had indeed entered into the pure covenant of grace

with that people; but he did not choose to administer it with so much mildness and enlargement to them then, as now under the New Testament. He chose to retain them like children under discipline, and cause them to long earnestly for the Messiah, who was to come. This the apostle teacheth us, when he saith, Gal. iii. 19, 23, 24, 25. "Wherefore then serveth the law? it was added because of transgressions," (namely, to the covenant established in Christ, and to the promise of grace, vs. 16, 17, 18) "until the seed should come," &c. Therefore the law was promulgated in accents of thunder, with so many fearful tokens before Israel, enforced in the second commandment with a threatening of the covenant of works, and rendered grievous by a burthensome ceremonial service, although with an evangelical design. And since this legal administration did not of itself give life, therefore it is called "a letter and ministration of death and condemnation," 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7, 9. The carnal and unconverted Jews, not comprehending the end of God in this legal administration, looked upon it as a covenant of works, crying inconsiderately, "All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do," Exod. xix. 8. Exod. xxiv. 3, and so they sought their righteousness by it, as Paul saith, Rom. ix. 31, 32. Therefore they are likened to the children of Hagar, Gal. iv. 21. And in this manner the covenant of Horeb is opposed to the new covenant of grace, Jer. xxxi. 31—34. And in this respect the apostle saith, Gal. iii. 25. After that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."

II. In order to illustrate this more fully, the instructor divides the ten commandments into two tables. The law was written upon "two tables," Ex. xxx. 18. Christ himself divides the law into two great commandments; the first of which enjoins love to God, and the other love to our neighbour. See Matt. xxii. 37—40. The Papists, in order to conceal their imageworship, reduce the first and second commandments to one, and assign only three to the first table, and seven to the second, dividing the tenth command into two commands. The Lutherans, who patronize images, as books of the laity, do the same. But besides that, these men must suspect that they are guilty of worshipping images, when they do either wholly abolish the second commandment, or exhibit it very imperfectly; the second commandment is wholly different from the first; for the first teacheth that we must serve God only, but the second teacheth in what manner we must serve him, to wit, that we must do it without images. We may sin against the first commandment without transgressing the second: we can also offend against the second without rendering ourselves guilty of transgressing the first: he who wor-

ships another, as the true God, or besides the true God, without an image, sins against the first, and not against the second commandment: but he who worships the true God alone by images, violates the second, and not the first commandment. We cannot make two commands of the tenth command, because only one sinful act, to wit, coveting is forbidden with respect to several objects, as Paul also observes, Rom. vii. 7. Moreover, we could not know by this division which was the ninth or tenth command; for in Exod. xx. 17, the ninth command would be, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house," and the tenth command, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife:" but in Deut. v. 21, that ninth would be the tenth, and that tenth the ninth command; for here the wife is mentioned first, and then follows the house, and thus otherwise than Exod. xx. 17. We therefore apprehend this better, when we as signfour commandments to the first table, and six to the second.

III. The first commandment, which is the foundation of all the other commandments, was pronounced by the mouth of the great Lawgiver in these words, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." The Lord God, speaking to the great congregation of his people, saith not "ye," but "thou," each of you in particular, as if each individual stood alone at the mountain, "shalt have no other gods before me." There are no other gods: but the sinner, "coming short of the glory of God," hath set up other objects besides God for gods, in opposition to the Lord, and so there are, as Paul speaks, 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6, "many that are called gods; whether in heaven, or in earth; but to us there is but one God." Therefore we may not have any other gods before him (or before his face) that is, no where, for his face, and "his eyes are every where, beholding the evil and the good," as Solomon speaks, Prov. xv. 3. Therefore the Lord requires that the idolater should "put away his abominations out of his sight," in order that he may return to him, Jer. iv. 1.

The God of Israel enjoins then two great things in this part of his word; First, that men should have and hold him alone for God; and then, that they should not have any other gods instead of, or besides him. Therefore we must hold and acknowledge the Lord for our God. The Lord was become the God of Israel by the covenant of grace: it was their duty therefore to hold and acknowledge him for their God, as Jacob vowed to the Lord, that "he should be his God," Gen. xxviii. 21, or as Asaph declared, when he said, Psalm lxxiii. 25, 26, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none

* This is according to the Dutch translation.

upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." The instructor showeth in what manner we do this, when he saith, that (a) "we must learn to know the only true God rightly." Since he alone is God, therefore he alone must be known as such, and indeed as our God in Christ, agreeably to his revelation. "This," saith the Saviour to his Father, "is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent," John xvii. 3. (b) "That we should trust in him alone." The Psalmist saith, "They that know thy name will trust in thee," Psalm ix. 11. When we trust in God, we rest and lean upon him, as our God in all cases, with calm tranquillity: "Commit thy way unto the Lord: trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass," saith David to the favourites of the Lord, Psalm xxxvii. 5. (c) The person, who is in covenant with God, must also "submit himself to God alone," as well with respect to his commandments by obedience to them: Israel declared readily, when they surrendered themselves in covenant to the Lord, Exod. xxiv. 7. All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient:" as with respect to his chastisements, "with all lowliness and patience: We had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?" thus asks Paul, Heb xii. 9. See how the saints did this, 1 Sam. iii. 18. 2 Sam. xv. 26. xvi. 7—13 Micha vii. 9. (d) "We must expect all good things from him" only, because he takes care, as the God of the covenant, of his covenant people: "The Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him," Lam. iii. 25. (e) As the Lord is worthy to be loved, and as he loves his people greatly, as the God of the covenant, therefore "we must love him with our whole heart" above all: "Hear O Israel," saith Moses, Deut. vi. 4, 5, "the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." (f) But when God enters into covenant with man in such a familiar manner, it ought not to beget any irreverence in us, but we must also "fear" and stand in awe of him: "Sanctify the Lord of hosts, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread," saith the prophet to the people of God, Isaiah viii. 13. (g) "The happy people, whose God is the Lord, must also "glorify him," since he is worthy of all glory, and "he hath formed his people for himself, that they may show forth his praise," Isaiah xliii. 21. See 1 Peter ii. 9. (h) Finally, the Israel of God "may not do any thing contrary to his will;" yea, "they should much rather

renounce and forsake all creatures, than do the least thing contrary to his will." This is to deny, not to know, yea, to hate ourselves, and all that belongs and is dear to us, for the Lord's sake : " If any man come to me," saith the Lawgiver, Luke xiv. 26, " and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

But when the Lord commands this, he then also forbids having any other gods in his stead, or besides him. The catechism explains this,

1. Of " idolatry," which is either a greater or less. The greater idolatry is either " to contrive, or to have in the stead of, or besides the one true God, any other object, in which men place their trust." The heathens defiled themselves abominably with this kind of idolatry ; for they held almost every thing in heaven, on earth, and in the sea, yea, even the sinful passions of men to be gods. The Jews were not entirely clear of these sins : " they forsook God, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that could hold no water," Jer. ii. 11, 12, 13. It is also a gross idolatry, when men acknowledge the true God to be God, but nevertheless make and worship something besides him as God. The heathens had, besides their supreme god, Jupiter, also many inferior gods. The old Samaritans " feared the Lord, and served their gods also," 2 Kings xvii. 33. The Papists conduct no better, for they have their breaden or mass-god besides the true God, and they ought therefore to be deemed idolaters. The less idolatry consists in being led by the depravity of our hearts from God to the creature. For instance, (a) when a person takes such a pleasure in himself, as if he were God, like Herod, Acts xii. 21, 22, 23. A person " sets his heart as God's heart," like the prince of Tyre, Ezek. xxviii. 2—6. (b) When a person ends in himself, and doth all things for his own sake. Our first parents ate of the forbidden fruit, that they might be like God. We ought to do all things on account of, and for the Lord's sake : but the sinful nature of Adam having been transmitted to his posterity, causeth us to " seek every one his own, and not that which is the Lord's," as Paul speaks, Philip. ii. 21. (c) It is also idolatry to purpose any thing rashly, and to believe, when we purpose it, that we shall succeed, without looking up to the Lord ; for we do then depend on ourselves, as if we were gods ; whether we do this in spirituals, with Peter, Matt. xxvi 31—35, or in temporals, James iv. 12—16. (d) To this we may add relying upon our own righteousness, thinking that we shall stand before God in our own duties, as though our own doings were an infinitely val-

sable righteousness; and thus "we submit not to the righteousness of God, but establish our own righteousness," Rom. x. 2, 3. (e) To this belongs also the love of money, desiring to be rich, as if riches were a kind of divinity, or our salvation: "Covetousness is idolatry," saith Paul, Col iii. 5, and "the covetous man is an idolater," Eph. v. 5. When men obtain many goods, they become proud of them, and "place their hope and trust in them," Job xxxi. 24. (f) It is thus also with sensual pleasures, in which men endeavour to delight themselves, as if they were Gods: "The belly is the God" of sensualists, Philip iii. 19. (g) It is not otherwise with confiding in warlike stores and heroes: the idolater is persuaded, that by these he will overcome his enemies. "He makes his power his God," Heb. i. 11. And it is no better to ascribe our gains, our acquisition of any goods to our own wise contrivance and power; for we do thus "forget the Lord, and we exalt" and place ourselves in the Lord's stead, Deut. viii. 11—17. (h) We add to this the fear of man. Whereby we suffer ourselves to be hindered from doing our duty, and from trusting in the Lord, and so "forget the Lord," Isaiah li. 12, 13. (i) Finally, having too high an esteem and affection for this and that human being is also idolatry. A husband, a wife, children, physicians, godly ministers possess the heart, like so many gods. Pious Asa was reproved for this, 2 Chron. xvi. 12. Cornelius and others, Acts x. 25, 26. xiv. 11—15. Rev. xix. 10. xxii. 8, 9.

2. The instructor mentions "sorcery" after idolatry. Sorcery (or witchcraft) consists not in doing any thing by slight of hand, and in such a manner, that it appears wonderful to us; but it is a doing of something by the help of the devil, which cannot be done by any human device or power: the Egyptian sorcerers did so with their enchantments, Exod. vii. and viii. To deny the existence of such sorcery, in order to maintain that the essence of a spirit consists in thought, and to say that a spirit cannot act upon a body, is a direct contradiction of the word of God, which forbids sorcery, and appoints a punishment for it, Deut. xviii. 10, Exod. xxii. 18. and it is making a jest of all human and divine history, which relates the actions of sorcerers; although every idle tale concerning sorcery is not to be credited neither. The reason why this abominable practice is forbidden here, is that we depart thereby from God, and betake ourselves to the devil, who is "the God of this world," 2 Cor. iv. 4.

3. "Soothsaying" is also forbidden here. This consists in endeavouring to discover hidden things, which we cannot know by natural means, or by divine revelation, either by tokens in the heavens, or in the hands, by the entrails of beasts, by the screaming of birds,

or by a diabolical art; for we do thus seek something of a divine nature out of the Lord, in the creatures, yea, in his enemy, and therefore this is forbidden, Lev. xix. 26, Deut. xviii. 10. Soothsayers are indeed "artists of Satan,"* according to the word of God, Lev. xix. 31.

4. The instructor speaks also of "superstition," by which men ascribe a certain divinity to something that doth not possess it. The Papists render themselves horribly guilty in this respect, when they ascribe a wonderful virtue and divinity to the water in baptism, to holy water, to the sign of the cross, to the relics of the saints, mumbling prayers, the monk's hood, and other matters. Yea, all the willworship of the Papists is nothing else but superstition: God requires none of these things at their hands. It is also silly in superstitious people, to hang a paper with certain figures, or the Lord's prayer about their necks, or to make use of other trifles in different ways against fevers, or other diseases. It is also foolish, to think that the mere saying of the sixth petition will expel the devil from us: we may also reckon it superstition to ascribe too much power to the means of grace, and to depend upon them; which Paul opposeth, 1 Cor. iii. 4—7. This command undoubtedly forbids superstition, since that supposeth something divine out of God, in things which do not possess it.

5. "The invocation of saints, whether angels or men, "or other creatures," is also forbidden here. For we do thus ascribe to the creatures the omniscience, omnipotence, and goodness of God, we practise heathenish idolatry, "serving them who by nature are no gods," Gal. iv. 8. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," saith the Saviour, Matt. iv. 10. The saints refused to be worshipped, as we see, Acts x. 14. Rev. xix. and xxii. The Socinians are therefore to be censured, since they worship Christ, whom they look upon to be a mere creature, as a God inferior to the Father. The Papists transgress still more, when they worship the saints. The Romish Church hath deified thousands, both saints and angels, after the manner of the ancient heathens, in order to worship them: she worships also other creatures, as the bread in the mass, holy relics, and the wood of the cross. In order to blindfold the people, she excuses herself by distinguishing between *latreia*, the worship which they offer to God, and *douleia*, the worship which they give to the saints, and *huperdouleia*, a higher worship than *douleia*, which they appropriate to Mary. But the word

* This is agreeable to the Dutch translation.

of God knoweth nothing of such a distinction ; and the people do not understand it ; the heathens might have excused their idolatry in the same manner, for they worshipped their gods with the worship of *douleia*, as Paul shows in the Greek, Gal. iv. 8. That the Romanists give divine honour to the creatures by this service, appears hence, that they offer them the service of the first table of the law by praying to them, swearing by them, and dedicating days and temples to them.

6 If time would permit, we should show further that this command forbids also ignorance, heresy, "bewitching" others spiritually, "that they should not obey the truth," Gal. iii. 1, unbelief, mistrust, despair, pride, impatience under adversity, disobedience, seeking our salvation out of God, want of love to the Lord, unfeelingness, hardness of heart, giving offence, dishonouring and blaspheming the name of the Lord, ungodliness, dissoluteness, and endeavouring to remove every idea of the godhead out of the soul, and to practise every kind of iniquity without fear, like "the fool, who saith in his heart, there is no God," Psalm xiv. 1. We must, if we wish to save our souls, avoid and flee from all these abominations ; for they who practise them cannot be saved, according to 1 Cor. vi. 10. Eph. v. 5, 6 Rev. xxi 8. How should God favour such a wicked person with his salvation, who doth not love him, but others in his stead, or besides him ?

This is then also an equitable command ; for there is no God besides the Lord, Deut. vi. 4. 1 Cor. viii. 6. He is Jehovah, who is alone worthy to be acknowledged. See Psalm xcvi. 5, 6. The Lord alone was the covenant God of Israel : Israel was therefore obliged to him alone. He alone had delivered that people out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage ; they were therefore under the strongest obligations to him alone. The face of God was every where, therefore how much soever any one concealed his idols, yea, though he erected his dunghill gods in his heart, it was still before the face of God ; he would see it, he would be jealous on account of it, and it would provoke him to anger. See Ezek. viii. This commandment is the foundation of all the others : he who transgresseth this, will not keep any other, and he who keeps this will not transgress any of the other commandments.

We look upon this commandment with good reason to be perfect ; for nothing more than this can be required of us, in order to acknowledge that the Lord alone is God. Therefore the Socinians reproach the only wise and perfect Lawgiver, when they say that this com-

mandment was not perfect; but that another Lawgiver, to wit, Christ, perfected and enlarged it with a command, that we should pray to God, and particularly after the pattern of the Lord's prayer, and that we must now pray to Christ also. See to what all this tends: there was then no command under the Old Testament to pray to God, contrary to Psalm l. 15. Men did not pray to him as their Father, who was in heaven, for the sanctification of his name, &c. contrary to Job. xxxiv. 36. Isaiah. lxiii. 16. Christ was not God then, and so not to be worshipped. Where will all this end? It is true, the ancients had not the form of the Lord's prayer in the same order, in which we have it now; but they were nevertheless obliged to pray for the same things with us.

APPLICATION.

As we had so many things to say, in order to explain our subject, we will add only a few words by way of application.

Whoever thou art, present thyself, as it were, at Horeb, behold the quaking, burning, and smoking mountain, the glittering flashes of lightning, and hear the Lord saying amidst the dreadful thunderings to thee, "I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have no other gods before me." It was for this end, that the Lord ordered his law to be written in his word, which is brought to thee also; yea, for this end it is read to thee every Sabbath, and the Lord speaks in it to thee also. Art thou not an Israelite by birth, but a sinner of the Gentiles, and hast thou not therefore been brought out of Egypt with respect to thy body; thou art nevertheless subject to the Lord; he is worthy for his own sake, and thou art naturally obliged to esteem, and acknowledge him to be God. "It appertains to him, that thou shouldest fear him." because he is incomparably glorious, Jer. x. 6, 7. Is not he thy God by the covenant of grace, he is by creation, by his providence over thee, and by all the favours which he hath shown to thee, especially by leading us out of the Romish Egypt. There is surely nothing more proper, than that we should acknowledge and fear our Creator and Benefactor alone as God.

It is certain that this law hath a relation to the covenant of works, and to the covenant of grace. If we will then make a profitable use of the law, it will be necessary for us to look at ourselves, and exam-

ine whether we are yet under the broken covenant of works, or under the new covenant of grace; for we must all of us order ourselves according to the law, as our condition requireth. Ye are all yet under the broken covenant of works, who have never learned by the law to acknowledge your sins and damnable condition with humility, with fear and concern, like Paul, Rom. vii. 7. See also Rom. iii. 20. Ye also, who by the righteous judgment of God according to the law, are subject to the dominion of sin, so that the motions of sins, which are by the law, work in your members to bring forth fruit unto death." Rom. vii. 5. Ye also, who seek your rest, peace and salvation of God by your own doings, and who do thus "establish your own righteousness, with the zealous Jews," Rom. x. 2. 3. But ye who have seen with concern your abominable misconduct, and your forlorn condition, who have fled therefore to the Mediator of the covenant; have chosen the Lord upon his offer for your God, in opposition to all others; have surrendered yourselves to him, and have engaged yourselves to be his people, and to obey his voice; yea, who make it your daily work to do all this, and strive to conduct in such a manner as is well pleasing to him, ye, I say, evidence that "ye have passed under the rod, and that ye have been brought under the bond of the covenant." Ezek. xx. 37.

Ye then, who are still under the broken covenant of works, and have never entered into God's covenant of grace, (a) Examine yourselves whether ye have kept the law of God, and this commandment in particular perfectly. Consider whether ye have, as ye ought, practised all the duties which it commands, and abstained from all the sins, which it forbids. Are ye no idolaters, sorcerers, or soothsayers, what is the reason and cause why ye are not the worst of sinners? Is it the fear of God that restrains you, and that ought to restrain you? no: but because ye have no opportunity to be so vile, because ye were otherwise educated, and your natural conscience doth not suffer you to be so wicked. See then also, (b) that ye are abominable, disobedient and to every good work reprobate; that ye are not, as ye now are, partakers of the life which was promised in consequence of perfect obedience: "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man who doth these things shall live by them," as Paul teacheth, Rom. x. 5, from Lev. xviii. 5. Yea, according to the covenant of works, ye are under the curse: for, "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Thus speaks the same apostle, Gal. iii. 10, from Deut. xxvii. 26. See also what

he saith to you, Rom. iii. 19, 20. (c) Do ye see this with grief and concern? Do ye not know what ye must do, in order to be saved? flee to the Mediator of the covenant, embrace him by faith for the reconciliation of all your violations of the law, and your abominable idolatry: "God sets him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins," Rom. iii 25. Make now a covenant with the Lord by his sacrifice, enter into it, and accept of his offer of the covenant. Hear him cry to you, Isaiah lv. 3, "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." (d) In the mean time consider and count the cost well even whether God and his favour be so precious in your esteem, that ye would be willing to endure every kind of reproach, pain and shame which may befal you with respect to soul and body, on account of them; and whether ye would be willing also to spurn all your seemingly honourable, pleasant and profitable idols, to "cast them away, as a menstruous cloth, and say to every one of them, get thee hence," as the covenant people do, Isaiah xxx. 22. Yea, consider before ye begin, whether ye be willing to keep the law of the covenant, and all the precepts of it to the least, as well as to partake of the blessings of the covenant We must count all these things, that we may not quit at last, and so appear ridiculous. The Lord Jesus teacheth us this by the similitude of a man, who builds a tower, and of a king who marches against his enemy, Luke xiv. 25—33. Are ye willing to do and to endure so much for the covenant, surrender yourselves then cheerfully in it to the Lord, and yield yourselves up to him, as Hezekiah admonished, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. Yea, come then upon the promises, in which he promiseth, Jer. xxx. 33. "to put this law into your inward parts, and to write it in your hearts; and that he will thus be your God, and that ye shall be his people." Bring your hearts to him, as Moses did the tables of stone, that he may engrave his law in them.

But ye, who have truly entered into covenant with God. (a) Behold your great happiness. Ye are delivered from the covenant of the curse by the Lord your God: whatsoever the Lord is, hath and doth with respect to his essence, his persons, his works from eternity and in time, is for you; he hath given you the greatest and the most precious promises: he will remain your God for ever; ye are his special property: surely "blessed is the nation, whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheri-

tance," Psalm xxxiii. 11. Yea, he magnifies you by his law; we may say of you with greater emphasis than Moses said of Israel, Deut. iv. 8, "What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous, as all this law is?" The free covenant of grace was administered in an exceedingly legal and rigorous manner to the ancient Israelites; the law of ceremonies was a heavy yoke for that people, though it had an evangelic design. But ye are no longer under the law as such "a schoolmaster," Gal. iii. 25. therefore boast and delight in this covenant, with David: hear him say himself, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. "Though my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow." (b) Though ye are no longer under the law, as the condition of the covenant of works, nor as a severe administration, nevertheless the law is, and remains a looking-glass for you, that ye may see your spots in it. Therefore examine yourselves by it; see how often ye have transgressed it, and how shamefully ye have offended against this commandment, that ye may repeatedly humble yourselves, and flee to your Surety for reconciliation. Thus Paul used the law, Rom. vii. and so the catechism requires us to improve it, Question 115. (c) Banish every idol now out of your souls, deny yourselves in all things, and let the Lord, your covenant God alone be your delight, and the object of all your desires, inclinations and actions, with Asaph, Psalm lxxiii. 25, 26. "Therefore, dearly beloved, flee from idolatry," thus we say with Paul, 1 Cor. x. 14, and with John, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols," 1 John v. 21. (d) Do ye see your impotency, seek strength in the covenant, plead the promises of the Lord which he makes, Ezek. xxxvi. 27, "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Convert his commandments into prayers with David, Psalm cxix. 4, 5.

Do ye go astray to your sorrow in any instance, it will never be a total apostacy; he hath, according to Jer. xxxii. 40, "made an everlasting covenant with you, that he will not turn away from you, to do you good; but he will put his fear in your hearts, that ye may not depart from him. Your steps are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in your way. Though ye fall, ye shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth you with his hand," as David saith, Psalm xxxvii. 23, 24. It is true ye stumble; but according to the words of the covenant, Jer. liv. 9. "He will not be

wroth with you, nor rebuke you. Your iniquity, though sought for ever so diligently, shall not be found; for I, saith the Lord, will pardon it," Jer. l 20. Doth the Lord in the mean while hide his face from you, on account of your sins, he will not do so for ever, for according to Rev. xxi. 3, 4, "his tabernacle shall be with you, and ye shall be his people, and he will be with you, and will be your God, and wipe away all tears from your eyes." Amen.

EXPLANATION

OF THE

SECOND COMMANDMENT.

XXXV. LORD'S DAY.

Exod. xx. 4, 5, 6. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing, that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Q. 96. *What doth God require in the second commandment?*

A. That we in no wise represent God by images, nor worship him in any other way than he has commanded in his word.

Q. 97. *Are images then not at all to be made?*

A. God neither can, nor may be represented by any means; but as to creatures, though they may be repreesnted, yet God forbids to make, or have any resemblance of them, either in order to worship them, or to serve God by them.

Q. 98. *But may not images be tolerated in the churches, as books of the laity?*

A. No; for we must not pretend to be wiser than God, who will have his people taught, not by dumb images, but by the lively preaching of his word.

IT is not so much the matter, as the manner and good quality of a work, that renders it good. Though a building were constructed of polished stones and of cedar wood, it would nevertheless be neither comely nor convenient, if the materials were not properly joined together, and if the apartments were not well adapted to their use. Although the matter of a garment were ever so costly, yea, such as would befit a king, it would notwithstanding be unseemly and disagreeable, if it were disproportioned to the body. The warlike apparel of Saul was such as became a king, but David rejected it, because it was not proportioned to his body, and he was not used to it. 1 Sam. xvii. 38, 39. It is thus likewise with all our religious performances. It is not so much the matter of our actions, as the manner and the requisite qualifications of them, that renders them good. The ceremonies of fasting and of sacrifices were commanded: but because the Lord's people did not perform them in a right manner, he disapproved of them, as abominations. See Isaiah i. 10—15 lviii. 1—5, The Lord saith, Isaiah lxvi. 3. "He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man: he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck: he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's flesh: he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol." The Lord is indeed a God, who observes strictly he looks not only at actions, but also at the qualities of actions; we must hear the word of God, but we must also "take heed how we hear," as Jesus admonisheth, Luke viii. 18. The great Lawgiver did not therefore deem it sufficient to require of his people in the first commandment, that they should honour and worship him alone as God, in opposition to all idols; but he requires also in the second commandment, that they should do this in a right manner, spiritually, and not only with the body; according to his prescript, and not just as they saw fit; in spirit and in truth, and not by images. when he saith, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness."

The Lord God, in order to discover his jealousy against images, forbids them,

I. Most circumstantially, and,

II. He assigns exceedingly weighty reasons to restrain all men from them.

I. It is necessary, 1, to explain what is forbidden here. 2, to inquire concerning what is commanded, and, 3, to show that this second commandment is not defective, but perfect.

1. God forbids making and honouring an image and likeness. *Pezel* signifies a graven image, and *themouna*. a likeness which represents something that exists; others have explained largely enough in what manner these words have been translated by the Greeks. It will suffice us to say, that they denote in this commandment images and likenesses of every kind, "whether graven, or molten, or painted, or woven. or embroidered. The Lawgiver speaks not therefore of "his own image and likeness, after which he made man," Gen. i, 26, but of an image and likeness, meaner than the man himself, made by himself, and thus not worthy that the maker of it should bow down himself to it. The Papists, not knowing how to excuse their forbidden imageworship, say that we must understand by image and likeness here, an image of an idol, which was contrived indeed by the heathens, but exists no where, and is thus an image of a falsehood, because the apostle saith, 1 Cor. viii. 4. "We know that an idol is nothing in the world." But to be nothing denotes here that an idol is not worthy, that we should ascribe any divinity to it; and therefore the idols are called *elilim*, "nothings," or "not gods." The divine command speaks of images and likenesses, which represent "that which is in heaven above," as the sun, moon, stars and birds; "that which is in the earth beneath," as men, beasts and plants; and "that which is in the waters under the earth," as brooks, streams, rivers, fishes and seamonsters.

The God of Israel forbids making images and likenesses of these things. The instructor asks with good reason, "Are images then not at all to be made?" Must we justify the followers of Mahomet, who proscribe entirely the art of making images? shall we utterly abolish the civil use of images, as ornaments of houses, cities and coins? If any should be so unreasonable, as to censure Solomon for adorning his throne with images of lions, he will certainly not disapprove of the conduct of the Lord, that he taught Bezaleel by his Spirit "to cut stones, and carve timber in a curious manner," Exod. xxxi. 1—5. When therefore the Lawgiver saith, "Thou shalt not make any image or likeness, he speaks of images, by which men endeavour to represent him in particular; for so this prohibition is explained, as we will show presently from Deut. iv. 15—18. God

forbids also every other kind of images, with respect to any religious use of them. The heathens and Jews were too wise to think that all their images represented God: they made images of creatures also, in order to honour God by them: therefore the Lord forbids also "bowing ourselves down to them, and serving them." The Hebrew word *Schachah* signifies an outward downbowing of the body, either with the head, or with the knees, or with the whole body to the earth. The Greek translators render this word by *proskunein*, to reverence, as the idolaters reverenced their images and gods, sometimes even by kissing them; for they kissed either the images themselves, or they kissed their hands in honour of their gods, whom they could not reach. See Job. xxxi. 26, 27. The other word *gnabad*, to serve, is translated by the seventy *latreuein*, and they translate it elsewhere *douleuein*. There is not therefore so great a difference between the service of *latreia* and *douleia*, as the Papists imagine. We have spoken more largely of this in the foregoing sermon. Thus all religious worshipping of images is forbidden, whether by praying or by sacrificing, or by burning incense, or by celebrating festivals.

The Lord God doth not forbid this making and worshipping of images without a reason. He knows the corrupt inclinations of the heart, which doth most easily suffer itself to be seduced to this abominable service: it knows that God ought to be worshipped; if we shall worship him, we must conceive of him as present with us; the soul bereaved of the image of God, knows not how to do this: therefore she did not know how to conduct better in this matter than by representing him in a bodily manner, and by directing her religious services to such a representation. The children of Ham and of Japhet, separating themselves from Shem, and from his true covenant God, invented even at an early period several gods for themselves; the sun, moon, and stars were first and before all others honoured as gods by the Babylonians After this they placed men also in the number of their Gods; they deified their parents, children, princes, heroes, and others, making use of certain ceremonies for this purpose. The Egyptians looked upon beasts, plants, crocodiles, serpents, and other monsters, to be gods Idolatry passed from them to the Greeks: and the Romans, although they were wiser than the rest, became so foolish, that they adopted the gods of all nations, and builded a Pantheon, or temple of all the gods, and brought all their gods into it. Even the Germans and Dutch* did

* Although the author speaks in the original only of the Dutch, it is evident from what he says, that he intends both the High and the Low Dutch.

not remain free of this vice: we have hence still the names sunday, monday, &c. The Germans and the Dutch worshipped particularly the sun, moon, Vulcan, Wodan, (called otherwise Mercury,) whence wednesday, Tuisco, and his son Man, who were forefathers of the Germans and Dutch. From Tuisco they seem still to be called Dutch, and from Man, Germans. The heathens made images of all these gods, bowed down to them, and practised every kind of worship before them. At first the idolaters were not so curious, as to make images of their gods, they contented themselves with an unhewn stone, or the unpolished trunk of a tree; but the arts multiplying, and the art of making images being invented, they made images of their gods of every form, of wood, stone, gold, silver, and other materials, according to their erroneous conceptions, which they had formed of their gods.

It was not so strange, that the heathens, whom God had abandoned to walk in their own ways, should be so madly addicted to idolatry, as that even the posterity of Shem, who were beloved by God, should apostatize thereto. "Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor, served other gods," in Ur of the Chaldees, Joshua xxiv. 2. Laban swore also by those false gods of his fathers, Gen. xxxi 53. He had also his Teraphims, or household gods, and Rachel, who was foolishly inclined to them, "stole them, Gen. xxxi. 19. Jacob indeed purged his house of them, Gen. xxxv. 2—4, but his posterity multiplying in Egypt, defiled themselves with the idolatry of the Egyptians. And although the Lord had brought them out of that house of bondage with great power, and with an outstretched arm, yet they made a calf at Horeb, and bowed down to a molten image: "They changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass." When Israel was come to the borders of the Moabites, "they joined themselves to Baalpeor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead," Psalm cvi. 19, 20, 28. The Israelites were but just settled in Canaan, when they adopted and served the gods of the heathens, who dwelled among them, and of the nations who were round about them. They served the Baals and Molochs of every people, the Apis, or calf of the Egyptians, the Ashtoreth of the Zidonians, the Chemosh of the Moabites, and other gods and goddesses, yea, they served them with the filthiest, lewdest and most cruel ceremonies: they made for them temples, high places, groves and images, which were fitter to frighten and to shock a per-

or as they are usually distinguished by the English, the Germans and the Dutch.

son, than to be worshipped; yea, they multiplied these images so exceedingly, that "they filled their land with them: they had gods, images altars and high places, not only according to the number of their cities," but even "according to the number of their streets," Jer. xi. 13. Ez k. xvi. 24, 25, 31. But the Lord punished them severely by the Babylonish captivity, which impressed a horrour of every kind of image-worship on them, that cleaves to their posterity even until this day.

It might be imagined, that Christians, having such examples before their eyes, greater privileges, and a clearer revelation, would not apostatize to image worship. The first Christians also knew nothing of images; neither the Saviour nor the apostles ordered the Christians to worship images; they who defended the laws of God time after time could not do this. The Christians were accused by the heathens of atheism, because they had no images. In the fourth century, when the church began to decline from her purity, there was here and there an image seen in the church; but Epiphanius, seeing a picture of Christ in a church, tore it in pieces. After this a certain bishop of Nola introduced images into churches for ornament and instruction; but they were not yet worshipped. When men began after this to worship images, Serenus, bishop of Marseilles, cast them out of the church. The bishop of Rome commended him for watching against image-worship, but blamed him for casting them out of the church, because, as he said, they might serve to instruct the ignorant. In the eighth century there were severe contests in favour of and against images. When John, Patriarch of Constantinople, a Monothelite, who held that Christ had only one will, was condemned by the Synod of Constantinople, in the year 711, the Roman bishop, Leo the second, caused pictures of all the members of that synod to be hung up in the porch of St. Peter. The emperour Leo Isaurus took this exceedingly ill, and ordered in the year 726, that no man should worship any image made by hands, and that all the images should be destroyed. The bishop of Rome excommunicated the Emperour on this account; but the Emperour laughed at him, and said, he is an idolater, and is himself excommunicated. Constantine Copronymus succeeding his father, as Emperour, was not less zealous against the images, and procured in the general synod of Constantinople, in the year 754, that the worshippers of images should be condemned, as idolaters; but the Empress Irene, who was sottishly addicted to image-worship, obtained in a Synod at Nice, in the year 787, that the images should be restored, served and worshipped. To manifest her special zeal for images,

she caused her father-in-law Constantine Copronymus to be digged up, burned, and his ashes to be thrown into the sea. She was so imbittered against her son also, on account of his aversion from images, that she caused his eyes te be thrust out, and afterwards ordered him to be slain. But Charles the great set himself against this madness, and assembled a synod at Frankfort, in the year 794, in which that Nicene synod was condemned. Nevertheless, all this struggling against the images did not reform the church of Rome, she adheres even until this day to the judgment of the false synod of Nice, the members of which doting upon the images, said, "We judge that the images of the angels and saints ought to be worshipped. If any man be not of this mind, but scrupulous and doubtful concerning the worship of the venerable images, the holy synod denounces an anathema against him." Therefore she appealed in the assembly of Trent to this synod; she likewise punctually observes the decree to worship images. Like the Armenians in the fifth century she represents the Holy Trinity by images, the Father, in the form of an old man, the Son like a young man, and the Holy Ghost like a dove. She conducts in this manner also toward the saints; her temples, cities and streets are full of the images of the saints; are they men she decks them like worldlings; are they women, she bedizens them, as if they were of the most wanton sort, and she acts thus especially with the images of Mary; they kiss the images, they burn incense to them, they bow themselves down to them, and mutter their prayers before them. Yea, this new Babylon, like the old, is "a land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols," as the Lord speaks, Jer. l. 38.

But we oppose such a conduct with this second commandment, which strictly forbids such making of images, bowing of ourselves to them, and serving of them. Hear how Moses explains it, when he saith to all Israel, Deut iv. 15—18. "Take ye therefore good heed to yourselves, (for ye saw no manner of similitude in the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the fire) lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make yourselves a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth." The Papists, like the heathens, "professing themselves to be wise, have become fools, since they have changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image, made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things," Rom. i. 22, 23. How can

we indeed represent that purely spiritual, infinite and invisible Being by images? Can he be expressed by the image of an old man, of a young man, and of a dove? no: "to whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare to him?" so we ask with the prophet, Isaiah xl. 18. "Who, or what" is like him? None, according to Jer. x. 6. And although there were no other evil in making an image of God, than that it causeth the rational creature to form a mistaken idea of God, and unfits him for contemplating God in Spirit and in truth, it ought nevertheless to be utterly detested. It doth not surely help the Papists, that God exhibited such tokens of his presence sometimes, Dan. vii. 13, Matt. iii 16, 17. But where have we either a command of God, or an example of the saints to warrant a delineating of God after those tokens?

But may we not make images of Christ and the saints, who conversed on earth in bodies, capable of being represented by images? But who among the makers of images hath ever seen them? who can tell us that the images, which men make now of Christ and of his saints, are like them, and not like others? hath any one informed them, that Christ was of a middle stature, neither too tall nor too short, of a fair and ruddy complexion, and that his hair was light, and dangled upon his shoulders in curls? he hath never seen Christ, but hath vainly depicted him thus in his own brain. If it were even so, that the makers of images had seen him and his saints, what need would there be that we should make images of them? ought not God's image of his Son, depictured in the gospel and in believers to suffice us? can we delineate the saints better to ourselves than by imitating their virtues? have the saints ever represented other saints to themselves by images? It is a mere fable, that Christ, when going to Golgotha, expressed the form of his countenance in the handkerchief of Veronica, (for that handkerchief is shown both at Rome and in Spain.) But that which presses the Papists here, is that they will worship the human nature of Christ, and the saints, which we have refuted before, and therefore they imagine that they ought to make images of them, that they may worship those images also.

The Papists transgress still more heinously by bowing down to those images, and serving them, yea, worshipping them. "We must worship and serve God only," as Jesus commands, Matt. iv. 10. Do the images know our wants? can they help us? are they not mere lifeless and irrational works? can they make, clothe, or keep themselves from being spoiled or robbed? shall a man bow himself down to what his fingers have made? what difference will

there then be between the imageworship of Jews and Gentiles, and the imageworship of Christians? yea, doth not the worshipper of images make himself like his images? let the worshippers of images hear how they are derided, Psalm cxv. 4—8 "The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not; hands have they, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them" The epistle ascribed to Jeremiah, among the apocryphal books,* at the end of the larger bibles, is worthy of a repeated perusal, that we may see the vanity of image-worship pourtrayed in the most lively colours.

We have refuted on the foregoing Lord's day, (a) the opinion that this prohibition of imageworship is the same with the first commandment, which forbids idolatry. And although it were even so, as the Romanists assert they do still commit idolatry with the images, which they say are forbidden in this commandment. (b) The Papists manifest their folly, when they say that this relates only to the Jews, who were inclined to idolatry, in consequence of their sojourning in Egypt; doth it not then relate to the Romanists also, who are not less inclined to idolatry than the Jews were? the law, and the reasons with which it is enforced, are universal, and reach to every person, who is subject to God, as a Lawgiver. This prohibition flows from the spiritual nature of God, which cannot be depicted, and it pertains thus to every man; and therefore Paul proves against the heathens, Acts xvii. 22, 29, "that we ought not to think that the Godhead is like gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device, because we are the offspring of God." Is not this argument as forcible against the images of the Papists, as against those of the heathens? Those among the heathens, who followed their natural principles would not suffer any images. I should be too prolix, if I should relate with others what many ancient writers of the heathens say of these things, and how many nations worshipped their gods without images. Or hath God forbidden only idolatrous images, and not images of himself and of his saints? but God doth not except any kind of images: "Thou shalt not make

* The Apocryphal books are placed at the end of the Dutch bibles, and not in the middle, as is usual in the English bibles. In these different arrangements the Dutch have consulted dignity, and the English method.

any image, nor any likeness" saith God. What are idolatrous images? are they not images, which designate God and his creatures? and are not the popish images such? (c) They cry in a shameless manner, We do not worship the images, but those whom they represent. Who can believe these men, who engaged in the council of Trent to obey the council of Nice, which denounces an anathema against every one, who is only scrupulous concerning worshipping images? do they not honour the images themselves, why then do they esteem one image above another, although it represents the same saint? for they bestow greater honour upon the images of Mary at Hall, at Montague, and at Loretto, than upon other images of that holy virgin. Let it be allowed, that they do not worship the images; but do they not bow down to them, contrary to this command? They say, We do not bow down in order to honour the images, but we honour and serve God by them. In this manner might the Jews also have excused themselves; for they intended to honour God by their images; Aaron made his calf, that "they might hold a feast to the Lord," Exod. xxxii. 1—6. Micha's mother "dedicated her silver to the Lord, to make an image," Judges xvii. 3. The heathens themselves were so wise, that they distinguished between their gods and the images of their gods. The Ephesians distinguished also between "the goddess Diana and her image, which fell down from Jupiter," Acts xix. 35. "Who but an entire fool can believe that the images are gods," said the heathen in Arnobius. (d) It is no better what the Church of Rome saith, that under the old testament they were obliged to worship the ark with its cherubims, because the Psalmist saith, Psalm cxix. 5. "Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool." But they were obliged to turn themselves toward the ark, because God manifested himself especially present there, but not to worship the ark. Must we say that Jesus worshipped the heavens, because, when he prayed, he lifted up his eyes toward heaven? John xvii. 1. Do the Papists say that we must not worship the images, but God who manifesteth himself in them, we answer, where doth this appear? doth God appear upon the images, as he did formerly upon the ark in a cloud? God hath removed the ark; shall we then now set up images in the stead of it, contrary to the command of God? We omit other cloaks of this shame, which uncloaks itself.

"But may we not tolerate images as books of the laity," that is, of the common people? When they introduced images into the churches in ancient times, they did not at first worship the images, but intended that they should serve for ornaments, to allure the hea-

thens, who were extravagantly fond of images; and also for instructing the ignorant The Lutherans also place images in their churches for this purpose. While Martin Luther lay concealed in the castle of Wirtemberg, from the wiles of the Papists, Andrew Carlstadt, assisted by others, cast the images out of the Church of Wirtemberg. Luther hearing of this, took it exceedingly ill, returned to Wirtemberg, and restored the images, saying that they could serve to instruct the the ignorant. But the instructor saith wisely, "We must not pretend to be wiser than God, who will not have his people taught by dumb images," &c. For, (a) if images were necessary and profitable to instruct in this manner, the Lord would not have prohibited them to us. Therefore they who desire to introduce images for this purpose, pretend to be wiser than God. The Lord God directs us to his word to instruct his people: we must betake ourselves "to the law and to the testimony," according to the divine command, Isaiah viii. 20. "The scriptures" alone "can make us wise to salvation, "2 Tim. iii. 15. By the lively preaching of the word of God "Jesus Christ is depictured before our eyes,"* as Paul speaks, Gal. iii. 1. (b) Images are unable to teach, they are dumb, "they have indeed mouths, bu they do not speak, neither do they utter any sound through their throat," as we have just now heard from Psalm cxv. 5, 7. If we receive no oral instruction, what will the image teach us by itself? it will mislead us and destroy the spirituality of our worship. "The stock," saith the prophet, is a doctrine of vanities." Jer. x. 8. "The molten image is a teacher of lies," Hab. ii 18, and "the idols speak vanity," Zech x. 2. There were indeed images of Cherubims in the tabernacle and temple, but they were appointed for types under the old testament, and are now abolished: those images were also removed from the sight of the people, and were thus not for the instruction of the laity,

It is unnecessary to say that we ought also to condemn the obsolete opinion of the Anthropomorphites, who ascribed a human body to God. Neither will I attempt to refute the willworship of the Papists, who pretend to serve God according to their own imaginations, or those of others: we have spoken of these things already on the thirty-third Lord's day. We will rather treat of the more secret vices, which are contrary to this commandment, that we may have a fuller discovery of our deformity. "The law is surely spiritual," according to Rom. vii. 14. Therefore this commandment without

* This is according to the Dutch translation.

doubt, forbids a want of spirituality in our religious worship. For instance, (a) forming a corporeal idea of God, when we pray. (b) "vehemently endeavouring to obtain a perfect conception and idea of God: we "cannot surely find out the Almighty to perfection," Job xi. 7, 8, 9. (c) Entertaining a different notion of God from what he hath revealed in his word. The sinner imagineth that God is like himself, and that he will forget and forgive his sins, as he himself forgives them; but the Lord will punish him, as we see, Psalm l. 21, 22. The people of God imagine that their affliction, "their way is hidden from the Lord, and their judgment passed over from their God." But the image of God, and the pattern of his word teacheth otherwise, Isaiah xl 27, 28. (d) It must also be reckoned a sin contrary to this commandment, to be dull, sluggish, and heartless in the worship of God, to be no more moved, than if we were images before God: "we draw near to him with our mouths, and honour him with our lips, but remove our hearts far from him," with the Jews, Isaiah xxix. 13. 14. (e) We may add also following evil examples; "we may not follow a multitude to do evil;" thus speaks the Lord, Exod. xxiii. 2.

Wherever we find any vice forbidden, there we have also a commandment, which enjoins the contrary virtues. It is required in this command, that they who love God should keep his commands, as he speaks in the reasons, with which he enforceth this command. Therefore (a) the word of God must be our pattern and rule in all things: we must "hold fast the form of sound words," as Paul admonisheth, 2 Tim. i. 13 (b) Our worship ought also to be reasonable, spiritual and without images, "in spirit and in truth," that we may serve the Lord as a spirit, according to his word, John iv. 24. (c) May we not serve God by images, then he only must be the pattern of our sanctification: therefore he saith to the children of Israel, Lev. xix. 2. "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy." He hath indeed exhibited his image to us in his commandments, and throughout his whole word.

3. This commandment being so broad, it ought not to be censured as imperfect. The Socinians say that the second commandment was imperfect; but that Christ, the new Lawgiver, hath perfected and enlarged it. And what hath Christ forsooth added to it, that was not forbidden before? they say, fleeing from idols, avoiding places where they are, and eating things sacrificed to idols. But the Lord commanded by Moses, that they should avoid even the names of idols, Exod. xxiii. 13, that Israel should burn the idols with fire, that they should not covet their silver nor gold, and that they should

destroy all the places, where they were formerly worshipped. See Deut vii 25, 26. xii. 2, 3. It was sinful in Israel to eat things, that were sacrificed to idols, "the sacrifices of the dead," Psalm cvi. 28. It was therefore forbidden by God through Moses, and indeed in this commandment.

II. Although this commandment is worthy, on its own account, to be approved and observed, it nevertheless pleases the Lord to enforce it by powerful motives; for he doth not only say, that he was "the Lord, the God of Israel," on which account they were obliged to observe his whole law, as hath been shown on the preface of the Lord to the law, in the former Lord's day; but he adds also two reasons to move them to observe this command, (1) "that he is a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him." The Lord, entering into a covenant with his people considers it as a marriage covenant, by which he was, as it were, the husband of Israel, and Israel, as it were, the wife of the Lord: if now Israel should cleave in love to the images, they would then, like an adulterous wife, hate the Lord their husband; therefore worshipping images is often represented to us as spiritual whoredom; which the Lord, inflamed with vehement jealousy, would revenge, as a husband avengeth himself on account of the adultery of his wife. Yea, with such severity would God punish this abomination, that he would visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation. We know how the children fared in the time of the flood, how Eli's and Jeroboam's posterity fared; which was surely not unrighteous; for since children are not only punishable on their own account, but were also admitted with their parents into that covenant, therefore they were considered by the Lord, as having broken that covenant, with their parents, when their parents were guilty of worshipping images, and were become thus children of whoredom. But although God executes his vengeance with severity, he nevertheless displays his mercy more than his severity. The justice of God is as natural to him as his mercy: but he chooses to manifest his mercy rather than his justice: for he doth not always execute his justice upon every sinner, and he saith that "the son shall not always bear the iniquity of the father." Ezek. xviii. 20. Therefore (a) "he also showeth mercy unto thousands of them that love him, and keep his commandments." The Jewish nation is still beloved for the sake of their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; who loved the Lord, and kept his commandments, and they will yet be converted to the Lord, in consequence of his mercy, as Paul

teacheth, Rom. xi. 24—28. And so the Lord promiseth that he will show favour to the offspring of all who love him. Therefore as parents do not desire that their children should suffer the grievous anger of God, but rather that they should experience his loving-kindness, they ought to be persuaded to abstain from breaking his commandments, and this commandment in particular, and to see that they keep it.

APPLICATION.

When we consider the attachment of Babylon to images, do we not then see, hearers, that our fathers had weighty reasons for leaving her? Rome, formerly a faithful city, was indeed become a harlot. The church of Rome, that adulterous woman, admitted strangers instead of her husband. Justly is she described, Rev. xvii. 1, 2, 5, as "the great whore, the mother of whoredoms, who made the inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication." The Jews, through their attachment to images, apostatized to heathenism: but the Papists exceed the heathens and Jews in worshipping images. The Lord God hath chastised that church severely by strange nations, and especially by the Turks, for her doting on images; but "she hath not repented of the works of her hands, that she should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see nor hear, nor walk," as John foretold, Rev, ix. 14—20. How could the trueborn children of God endure this? for their flesh abhorred this wickedness, when they saw it, and when they were obliged to betake themselves to a man on a cross, instead of the crucified Christ and his Spirit; and they were besides this murdered also, because they would not bow their knees to the abominable images. Therefore they justly pleaded with their mother, because she was not the wife of the Lord, nor he her husband; and they did not forsake her, without a reason, since she was incorrigible. May the Lord preserve us from returning to her impure bosom again.

It is time, hearers, to come to ourselves. Was this command, with its threatenings and promises, given to Israel only, and not to us also? But have ye also kept it? Yea, will some of you think, we have never bowed our knees to the images of Babylon: but doth God forbid nothing but making images, bowing ourselves to them,

and serving them? surely yes: he forbids here also the spiritual imagemaking, and the inward imageworship. (a) When ye pray to God, what do ye make of him? what do ye propose to yourselves, when ye address him? nothing at all? do ye only mutter a few words? or do ye propose to yourselves a vast, extended body, that fills the universe? How many are there who often, yea, usually propose to themselves, next to their teraphims, household gods, or pictures, an image of a man on a cross, if not of an aged father, a young son, and a dove, that they may mumble a few words to those images! (b) If ye do endeavour to know God, and to discover what he is, do ye then give heed only to what he reveals concerning himself in his word, and believe it with simplicity of heart, because he testifieth it? it is then well But how often do men endeavour to intrude with their fleshly understandings into the unsearchable mysteries of God, to inquire how he can be simple, and yet just, merciful and triune; how he hath elected one, and rejected others; how he can conclude all men under the disobedience of Adam. When they cannot see into these things, nor reconcile them to their corrupt ideas, they imagine evil against the Lord, they deny the truth, and join themselves to the enemies of it, if not in profession, at least in heart. (c) Come, impenitent sinner, what thinkest thou, or what dost thou imagine concerning the Lord, with respect to thyself? will he indeed mark thy sins strictly, and punish them so severely, as he saith in his word? thou thinkest, no, God is good and merciful: I hope that he will not notice my sins so particularly. I trust that he hath forgiven them already; I am not concerned about it, he blesses me, and with careless Judah, Jer. ii. 35, thou sayest, "Surely I am innocent; for his anger is turned away from me." Thou dost not doubt but that thou wilt be saved. Thou believest that God would not otherwise be merciful, and that Christ would have died in vain. Therefore God, according to thine imagination, which thou formest of him, will deny his justice, and will revoke all his threatnings against thee. Behold what an abominable image thou makest to thyself of God, thou bowest down thyself to it, and servest it. (d) Further my friends, when ye are about to serve God after your manner, to pray to him, to read and hear his word, how are ye then disposed? "Is not God only near in your mouths, and far from your reins?" as the prophet speaks of his countrymen, Jer. xii. 2. Do ye not come before his face, like immoveable stocks and stones? Men may see in you, when ye attend upon the public worship, that ye are as inattentive, and as unaffected, as the popish images, which are more in the church than ye are. The looks of

your countenances testify against you. (e) And what is your rule and pattern, which ye propose to yourselves, in order to direct your goings? is it the word of the Lord, and his image expressed therein, and in his saints? Verily, the most of you know nothing of this: comparing themselves with themselves, they imagine that they know best what they ought to do: they propose the honours, the pleasures and profits of the world to themselves, as alluring images, and they govern themselves by those in all that they do, and forbear.

Ye have therefore sinned in a dreadful manner against this commandment. Are ye not Papists by profession, ye are such in your hearts, and in your conversation. And what restrains you from serving the Romish images? Is it the commandment of God, his threatening and promises? Is it the fear of God? no; but because ye have no opportunity for it, and have been born and educated among reformed Christians. If your parents, friends and preachers should return, either willingly, or compelled by persecution, to the Romish Egypt, ye would soon follow their examples. Your disposition is therefore abominable; like the worshippers of images ye are destitute of the divine image, and your "understanding is darkened, and ye are alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in you, and the hardness of your hearts," Eph. iv. 18. Ye hate the Lord, and are exceedingly guilty before him. If ye remain as ye are, ye cannot expect any mercy, but that his anger and jealousy will be kindled against you: "As a dream, when one awaketh, so when he awaketh, he will despise your image," as Asaph expected, Psalm lxxiii. 20.

But neither are ye, O believers, though ye are newformed after the image of God, altogether innocent. How often do those spiritual images possess you, and hinder you in your contemplations, and in your worship of God, as a being who is altogether spiritual? yea, do they not destroy the purity and spirituality of your devotions? and do they not leave only a few barren, lifeless and sapless exercises?

Whoever ye are, whether lovers or haters of the Lord, have ye any desire to regulate yourselves according to this commandment:

1. See then your shameful doting upon images, and your transgressions against the Lord. Examine yourselves by what we have just now said, in order to discover to you your misconduct, and your spiritual imageworship: put your hands into your bosoms, and see whether they will not come out leprous: your recovery must begin here, they who are whole need not a physician, but they who are

sick. Shut not your eyes then and flatter not yourselves with Judah, who was sottishly addicted to images, as if ye were innocent. Hear the Lord say to every one of you also, as he said to that people Jer. ii. 23. "How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? see thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done: thou art a swift dromedary, traversing her ways," Jer. ii. 23.

2 But will it suffice to see and know your transgressions in a slight manner? no, but ye must be ashamed of them, and must humble yourselves before the Lord. What is more shameful, what provokes the Lord more to anger and jealousy, and what ought to fill a person with shame more than this sin? The idolatrous image is emphatically called "Shame," Jer. iii. 24, xi. 13. Hosea ix. 10. Was it not so called, because the people of the Lord ought to be ashamed of their worshipping of images? Therefore stand still awhile by these sins of yours, and behold them, until ye blush for shame of them before the Lord, as the Lord's returning people, bemoaning themselves on account of their worshipping of images, said before the Lord, Jer. iii. 25, "We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us; for we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God."

3. Flee unto Christ, the image of the invisible God, to obtain pardon for this iniquity: "Christ is the end of the law," and so also of this commandment, "to every one who believeth," saith the apostle, Rom. x. 4. By your transgressions of this commandment ye have rendered yourselves guilty, and have provoked the Lord to jealousy against you, that he should visit your iniquities upon you. Will ye not now endeavour to be delivered from this guilt, and to be reconciled to God? and how shall ye obtain reconciliation? He only, who is the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person, hath by himself purged our sins, Heb. i. 3. Flee then every one of you to him, "lay hold on him, and make your peace with God," as it is said, Isaiah xxvii. 5.

4. Be earnestly desirous, that the Lord would imprint his image upon you. Bring your hearts unto him, that he may express his image, the transcript of his law, in you. The zeal of faithful preachers tends to this, with Paul they "travail in birth, till Christ be formed in you," Gal. iv. 19. Look then much at the Lord, and at his image, that his beams may irradiate you, and may cause you to shine by his glory. See how this happened to Moses, Exod. xxxiv. 29, 30. Paul having respect to this case, saith 2 Cor. iii. 18, "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,

are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Yea, in all your conversation "be ye followers of God, as dear children," Eph. v. 1.

5. Regulate all your conceptions of the Lord and of his ways by his image expressed in his word. Whatever ye think, judge, or say of him, if it agree not with his word, ye must reject it as hurtful, yea, as reproachful to the Lord. Beware in all your approaches to him of bodily and excessive exertions, in order to conceive highly of him: ye are too contracted to comprehend many great things of him. Even when the Lord sheds much light into the soul, she still "sees only the utmost ends of his ways, and hears only a small portion of him; who then can understand the thunder of his power?" Job xxxvi. 14. When "the Lord beset David in all that he did," he was still obliged to cry out, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is too high, I cannot attain unto it," Psalm cxxxix. 6. To exert ourselves, in order to conceive highly of God, deprives our souls of their vigour, and renders our understandings dull. It is best to approach unto God in a sober manner, with a belief of his omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, and goodness; and therefore Paul saith, Heb. xi. 6, "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

6. Seek to be filled with the Spirit of the Lord, and to perform all your works by him; for without him both we and all that we do is like an image without spirit. "Be filled with the Holy Spirit," saith Paul, Eph. v. 18. "We must live and walk in the Spirit," Gal. v. 16, 25. We must "mortify the deeds of the body, be led, cry Abba, Father, and assure ourselves by him," Rom. viii. 13—16. It therefore behooves you to pray earnestly with David for the Spirit, Psalm cxliii. 10, "Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God: let thy good Spirit lead me in the land of uprightness." Let it not however satisfy you, that the Lord hath favoured you with his Spirit, but be earnestly desirous that the church also may be filled with him, agreeably to the representation of the Spirit in Ezekiel's vision of the waters, which rose to a great height, Ezek. xlviii. 1—10. For when the Spirit departs from the church, she is filled with images.

7. Let every one of you manifest his aversion from the Popish images, and let the magistrates destroy them. We ought all, and each of us in his station to act the same part toward the images which we have said we ought to act toward the Popish mass.

In the mean while, the soul, who seeks to love the Lord and to

keep his commandments may assure herself that he will show mercy to her and to her seed; "Jesus and his Father will love her, will manifest themselves to her, and make their abode with her," as he promiseth, John xiv. 21, 23. He will be jealous, not against her, but for her, to the destruction of her enemies; for "thus saith the Lord of hosts, I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy. And I am very sorely displeased with the heathen that are at ease," Zech. i. 14, 15. Yea, the Lord will adorn those who love him with his beauty, that he may glorify them; and they may with an elevated mind, like David, Psalm xvii. 15, say with confidence, "I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." Amen.

EXPLANATION

OF THE

THIRD COMMANDMENT.

XXXVI. LORD'S DAY.

Exodus xx. 7. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Question 99. What is required in the third command?

Answer. That we, not only by cursing or perjury, but also by rash swearing, must not profane or abuse the name of God; nor by silence or connivance be partakers of these horrible sins in others; and briefly, that we use the name of God no otherwise, than with fear and reverence, so that he may be rightly confessed and worshipped by us, and glorified in all our words and works.

Q. 100. Is then the profaning of God's name by swearing and cursing so heinous a sin, that his wrath is kindled against those, who do not endeavour as much as in them lies to prevent and forbid such cursing and swearing?

A. It undoubtedly is, for there is no sin greater, or more provoking to God, than the profaning of his name; and therefore he has commanded this sin to be punished with death.

GREAT personages excite in those who are meaner than they, reverence and respect. A mean man, when speaking to his superior, will sometimes not know what to say, and will be so abashed, that he will not be able to utter his words distinctly. When Job "went out to the gate, through the city, when he prepared his seat in the street, the young men hid themselves; and the aged arose and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand upon their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth," Job xxix. 7—10. It is also proper, that men should have a moderate reverence for their superiours; for if there be aught in any person that renders him more worthy than ourselves, we ought to acknowledge it. The Lord God himself requires that we should "rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man," Lev. xix. 32. Is this proper, it is still more becoming that we should bow down with profound reverence before the high God. See Isaiah vi. 1—5, how "the Seraphs cover" with a holy reverence "their faces and feet," and proclaim the awful holiness of the Lord, and how the holy prophet shrinks in his own eyes on account of it. Indeed, whatever is worthy of honour in any creature is from the Lord. He is higher than the highest, and is worthy on his own account to be feared: "Forasmuch as there is none like him, therefore he is great, and great is his name in might. Who would not then fear him? for to him doth it appertain," as the prophet saith, Jer. x. 6, 7. Doth not the sinner fear God, he will "correct him on account of his wickedness," as he saith, Jer. ii 19. Even those who do not use his name with a holy reverence and respect, but take it in vain, he will not hold guiltless, as he declared from Sinai amidst dreadful thunderings, and fearful lightnings, in the third commandment. He did not judge it sufficient to enjoin in the first commandment, that we should worship him only; and in the second commandment, that we should worship him according to his word, in spirit and in truth, without images; but he also ordains in this third commandment, according to his sovereign excellency, and with a severe threatening, that we should worship him with fear and reverence.

We must speak here of three particulars,

I. What the name of God is.

II. That we may not take it in vain, and

III. The nature of the threatening, with which this command is enforced.

1. Although there is none like the Lord, and he therefore doth not need a name to distinguish him from others; nevertheless since the inventors and promoters of idolatry have wished to impose those who were like him on the world, and since a name serves to make a person better known to others, therefore the Lord, in order to distinguish himself the better from the intruded idols, and to make himself known to his people, hath revealed himself by a name. But as the Lord is infinitely excellent, it is impossible to express his excellency by a single name, and therefore the name of God intimates several particulars. The name of God signifieth sometimes God himself, so far as he makes himself, his perfections and excellencies known to his reasonable creatures, by his words and works. Therefore Moses saith, Deut. xxviii. 58, that Israel ought "to fear that glorious and fearful name, the Lord their God." God being asked what his name was, said, "I AM THAT I AM," Exod. iii. 13, 14. But inasmuch as the essence of God, as it is in itself, cannot be expressed by any name, since he surpasseth every conception and expression, therefore the name of God doth not denote God, as he is in himself, but as he makes himself known in his perfections and excellencies, and particularly, as the God of the sinner, by which he reveals himself in the most glorious manner with respect to his excellencies and perfections. When he was willing, upon the intercession of Moses, to forgive the sin of Israel, he declared his name, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth," Exod xxxiv. 5, 6. 7. For this end he gave his Son, "in the midst of whom is his name," Exod. xxiii. 21. And who by his words, works, sufferings and glory, "manifested his Father's name unto the men whom the Father had given him," John xvii. 6. For this end he gives also his word and instituted worship, in which his people "walk, as in the name of the Lord their God," Mich. iv. 5. So also the great works of the Lord make him known as his name. David having respect to this, begins and concludes his eighth psalm with the words, "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" And therefore we must understand by the name of God all those particulars by which he reveals and makes himself known; as also certain nouns, to wit, Lord, God, of which there are several in Hebrew and Greek, as we have shown on the eighth Lord's day.

2. Since now man, especially an Israelite, is directly subject to "the Lord his God," and hath the greatest concern in him, therefore he must use his name. The word *Nasa*, which occurs here in

the original, and is rendered by our translators, "to use,"* signifieth to take, to take up, to lift up and bear, to wit, in order to make use of the name of God; as is done by calling ourselves after that name, which we do, when we enter into covenant with God: "We are called by thy name," saith the church to the Lord, Jer. xiv. 9. Or by private contemplations and meditations, like David, whose "meditation of the Lord was sweet," Psalm civ 34. Or by words, "speaking" with ourselves "of the works of his hands," Psalm cxi. iii. 5, and "exalting his name," in the presence of others, Psalm xxxiv. 3. Or by religious exercises, as "men began at the time of the birth of Enos, to call on the name of the Lord," Gen. iv. 26. Or by our whole conversation, that, as the apostle saith to the Thessalonians, 2 Thess. i. ii. "the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him." Therefore when the Lawgiver saith that we must not take his name in vain, he commands, according to the explanation of the instructor, "that we should use the holy name of God no otherwise than with fear and reverence." And so this command requires that holy fear, and that profound reverence for God, by which we "fear that glorious and fearful name," Deut. xxviii. 38, so that we sanctify the Lord of hosts, and make him our fear and our dread," as the prophet admonisheth, Isaiah viii. 13. Surely not with a slavish fear, "which terrifies the sinner, and surprises him with fearfulness, as it were for a devouring fire, and for everlasting burnings," Isaiah xxxiii. 14, but with a childlike fear, which causeth us to love and fear the Lord as our God, according to the covenant of grace; therefore the Lawgiver speaks of himself as of the God of Israel, thou shalt take the name of "the Lord thy God." And so we must, with such a holy reverence and fear for him, (1) enter into covenant with him, that we may be called by his name, and may "say, yea, subscribe with our hand, I am the Lord's," according to Isaiah xliv. 5. To do this rashly and unadvisedly, only with words, making merely an outward confession, and a bodily use of the signs of the covenant, is hateful in the sight of God. To such persons "God saith, What hast thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth?" Psalm l. 16. The children of Israel will enter in a better manner into the covenant in the latter days, when, according to the prophecy, Hosea iii. 5. "They will return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; for they will come with fear to the Lord, and to his goodness." (2) Neither may we think of the Lord, or of aught that pertains to him,

* The Dutch translation hath *use* instead of *take*.

except with a holy trembling. David prayed for this, when he said to the Lord, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins. Let the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight," Psalm xix. 14. "How precious are thy thoughts unto me. O God!" Psalm cxxxix. 14—18. He spake thus, when he considered that "he was fearfully and wonderfully made." (3) When we speak of, and to God, we must not only "say to him, how terrible art thou in thy works!" as the Psalmist requireth, Psalm lxvi. 3, but we must also humbly account ourselves, as dust and ashes before the Lord, with Abraham, Gen. xviii. 27. "We must not be rash with our mouths, nor let our hearts be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and we on earth; therefore our words must be few," as Solomon admonisheth, Eccl. v. 2. If we shall "teach others the fear of the Lord," with David, Psalm xxxiv. ii. we must then never speak of the Lord, but with reverence. When Elihu spake to Job concerning the great works of the Lord, he said, Job xxxvii. 1. "At this also my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place." (4) When we call on the name of the Lord and perform any kind of religious worship, (for calling upon God denotes religious worship in general, Joel ii. 32.) we must do it with a holy fear for God: "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling," saith David, Psalm ix. ii. His son Solomon saith, Eccl. v. i. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God." When we either read or hear the word of God, we should "tremble at it," Isaiah lxvi. 2. If we will worship the Lord with David, Psalm v. 7, "we must worship in his fear toward his holy temple." Doth an opportunity offer, and are we called to it, we must also rightly and reverently confess him," that is, profess him; "Be ready always," as Peter saith, 1 Peter iii. 15, "to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." (f) Yea, we ought so to order our whole conversation in a holy fear for God, "that his name may not be blasphemed on our account, but honoured and praised," as the catechism saith. Our countenance, our words, gestures, clothing, discourse and whole behaviour ought to be grave, humble and modest, that every one may see that we have God before our eyes, and that we fear him. See what Solomon enjoineth on us with respect to our whole outward behaviour, Prov. iv. 24—27. But hear also how Paul requires that the Philippians should "be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom they shine as lights in the world," Philip. ii. 15. It

could be seen in Hanani, that "he was a faithful man, and one who feared God above many," Neh. vii. 2. And the Shunamitess perceived that Elisha was holy, 2 Kings iv. 9.

In this manner must the person who is in covenant with God, use the name of the Lord his God; but it is forbidden to use (or take) it in vain. The Socinians imagine, in order that they may represent Christ as a new Lawgiver, that he hath added to this commandment not only that we may swear by his name, because, according to Rev. iii. 23. 'He searcheth the heart and reins," as if that were not allowable under the Old Testament, and as if he, who searcheth the hearts and reins, were not the eternal and allknowing God; but they say also, that he hath forbidden all rash oaths under the New Testament, which, as they pretend, were not forbidden under the Old Testament, provided only they were not false; therefore they will not translate the Hebrew word *lasschave*, "in vain," but "falsely." It is true, the word *lasschave* signifies also falsely; as it is also translated, Deut. v. 20. But it signifies also "in vain, vanity, and to no purpose." See Psalm cxix. 37. cxxvii. 1. The seventy translators have also rendered it by *mataion*, "vanity." And who that knows the fearful name of God, and the honour due to him can believe that men were allowed under the Old Testament to take his name in vain?

To take God's name in vain, is to make use of it without weighty reasons, to a vain, unprofitable and unnecessary purpose, with a vain heart, which is void of the Spirit, and in a vain, trifling and sinful manner. This is done, 1. By blaspheming and reproaching the name of God, which we do, (a) when we deny the being and perfections of God, and ascribe them to the creatures: "The fool saith in his heart, there is no God." Psalm xiv. 1. The wicked man "blasphemes God," and persuades himself, that God "covers himself with the clouds," that he "knoweth nothing" of what the sinner doth, and that he doth not regard it, to require it of him, Job xxii. 13, 14, Psalm x. 13. Yea, he thinks and "speaks of the true God, as of the gods of the nations of the earth, which are the works of men's hands." So Rabshakeh blasphemed and reproached the Lord, 2 Chron. xxxii. 19. He was that "wicked counsellor, who imagined evil against the Lord," Nahum I. ii. (b) Or when we ascribe absurdities to God, and speak reproachfully of him. So the Jews "wearied the Lord with their words, when they said, Every one that doth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them," Mal. ii. 17, and "the way of the Lord is not equal," Ezek. xviii. 25. It was blasphemy, when the Jews railed at the Son of

God, as a glutton, a winebibber, one who had a devil, and was a blasphemer. (c) When the sinner becomes angry and displeased with the Lord on account of the afflictions, with which he visits him: "When he is hungry, he looks upward and curses his God," Isaiah viii. 21. This is blaspheming, Rev. xvi. 9, 11, 21. (d) Or when we speak contemptuously of the works of God, of his worship, of his servants, children, and of persons, who are defective. So "the Jews contradicted and blasphemed the things which were spoken by Paul," Acts xiii. 45. To reproach the godly is to "blaspheme that worthy name, by which they are called," James ii. 7. See Prov. xvii. 5. Acts ix. 4. 1 Pet. iv. 14. (e) The name of God is also blasphemed, when those who profess his name live ungodly lives: Israel, "a people laden with iniquity, blasphemed the Holy One of Israel," Isaiah l. 4. For such an offensive life causes those also who are without, to blaspheme the name of the Lord and his service, 2 Sam. xii 14. Rom. ii 23, 24. (f) But the sinner renders himself guilty of the highest, and of an unpardonable blasphemy, when, after a preceeding conviction and enlightening of the Holy Spirit, he maliciously rejects and resists the truth and piety of the gospel, without a powerful temptation of endangering his life. This is "the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost," Matt. xii. 31, 32.

2. We take the name of God in vain also by cursing, whereby we wish and desire of God, that he would inflict some evil upon a person. We may not refer to this, that the prophets at certain times, from a holy zeal, cursed the openly profane, and the enemies of the church; which we may nevertheless not imitate. When "John and James would call fire down from heaven" upon the Samaritans, "as Elias had done, Jesus said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Luke ix. 54, 55. It is nevertheless not unlawful to pray with "the souls under the altar," Rev. vi. 10, that the Lord would destroy the incorrigible enemies of the church: we must pray for the church, and therefore also against the enemies of the church. But this command forbids that cursing, which proceeds from a special hatred, by which we desire that evil may betide our neighbour, either from anger on account of some real, or supposed injury, or from envy on account of his prosperity; whether we express our curse with words, as Shimei did, 2 Sam. xvi. 5, 6, 7, 8, or whether we curse him, when we are alone, and in our thoughts, contrary to the precept of Solomon, Eccl. x 20. Dreadful are the wicked customs of the ungodly in this respect, they wish that this and that may smite and fetch their neighbour. Or they wish that evil may befall themselves, either from a vexatious fretfulness on

account of some difficulty, like Job and Jeremiah, who were transported so far, that they cursed their joyful birthday, Job iii. i. Jer. xv. 10. or in order to deliver themselves from some danger with Peter. Matt. xxvi. 74, or to procure some injury to others as "the Jews bound themselves with a curse, that they would kill Paul." Acts xxiii. 22. And thus we use the name of the Lord for a wicked purpose: we wish that the high God would fulfil our wicked desires. But hear, ye cursers, if God should bring all your wicked curses upon you, how wretched would ye be!

3. We also abuse the name of God by perjury, (or false swearing;) either confirming with an oath a matter, which we know to be otherwise; as "when a person hath found something that was lost, and lies concerning it, and swears falsely," Lev. vi 3, or promising upon an oath to do something, which we intend not to do; or of which we know before, that we cannot do it, and thus "swearing deceitfully," Psalm xxiv. 4, or not keeping the promise, to which we have sworn as Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, who had "made him swear by God," 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13, Ezek. xvii. 18.

4. We may easily conceive that we take God's name in vain also by swearing without necessity, and rashly. We do this, (a) when we are forthwith ready to confirm without necessity whatever we say with an oath. Solomon describes a godly man, as "one who feareth an oath," but a wicked man, as "one who sweareth," Eccl. ix. 2. (b) We swear likewise without necessity, when we promise with an oath to do what we ought not to do, as Jephthah and Herod swore to their sorrow, Judges xi. 30, 31. Matt. xiv. 6, 7, 8. (c) We swear also rashly, when we are urged by a sudden passion to bind ourselves by an oath to do this or that; as David, vexed by the incivility of Nabal, swore that he would destroy him and all that he had, 1 Sam. xxv. 22. We swear rashly also, (d) when we confirm any truth or purpose with very high-strained expressions; the name of God, his word and sacraments are not too holy for the children of Belial to swear by; thunder and lightning are not too fearful; their souls and salvation are not too precious; eternal damnation and the judgment of God are not too dreadful. (e) Other vain persons will invent jocular oaths, to divert themselves and others, as if that were not swearing rashly, and taking God's name in vain.

5. This is also done by every kind of abuse of the name of God: as (a) by an unholy use of the lot, the event of which depends upon the immediate direction of God, and not upon human contrivance: "The lot," saith Solomon, Prov. xvi. 33 "is cast into the lap: but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." This is abu-

sed, either when we might make use of something else in disputes, and nevertheless betake ourselves to the lot; for we then make use of it without necessity, and we tempt God; or when we make use of it irreverendly, without looking up to God, as if the event of it were only casual; or when we are discontented, when it proves unfavourable to us; but we abuse the lot still more, when we make use of it in games, either for profit or pleasure; for we do then sport with the immediate providence of God: making use of the lot in games is necessarily accompanied with many other sins, particularly that the gamesters mispend their precious time without any essential advantage, and that they become so sottishly addicted to gaming, that it possesses the whole man, and they cannot disengage themselves from it; they are driven to it, as it were, by a spirit of witchcraft: the saints never made use of lots in games, but only in weighty and sacred matters: persons attached to gaming increase disputes, contrary to the nature of the lot, "which causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty." Prov. xviii. 18. (b) The name of God is also fearfully abused in comedies and stage-plays; vain persons will take the holy name of God in their mouths in an unholy manner, will repeat divine histories idly and for diversion, will exhibit the ancient idolatry in the most agreeable manner, and will personate and represent either a saint or sinner. (c) I may not insist particularly on abusing the name of God, either from custom, when we use the name of God upon every occasion, and say, O Lord, O God! or by corrupted words, when we use, instead of the word God, the words sacraments, or the devil, or some other word which nearly resembles these, as if we were exceedingly godfearing persons, or by making use of the word and worship of God, as subjects of quibbles and foolish jesting, or to excuse our faults. Surely these are base methods of profaning God's great name. I would rather explain in what manner men abuse the name of God in religious worship. Will not every one allow that he abuses the name of God, who uses it too frequently, and only to fill up a sentence, or with an unholy heart in his prayers? Can any person consider himself as not guilty of taking the name of the Lord in vain, who behaves himself irreverendly in the presence of God, either in his private or public worship? See how ill the Bethshemites and Uzza fared, in consequence of their irreverent conduct toward the ark of God, 1 Sam. vi. 19. 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7. It is still more abominable to appear in the presence of God with a wicked heart and design, in order to cloke our abominable actions, and so from hypocrisy, as if the worship of God were a cloke for shame. See how ve-

hemently the Lord reproves this conduct, Jer. vii. 4, 8, 9, 10. (d) We abuse the name of God also, when we behave vainly, lightly, dissolutely, and without the fear of God in all our conversation: of such the Lord saith, Isaiah lvii. 11, "Thou hast not remembered me, nor laid it to thy heart." (e) He also renders himself guilty of this dreadful sin, who, when he sees or hears it, observes it, and remains silent. "He who heareth the voice of swearing, if he do not utter it, then "shall he bear his iniquity," according to Lev. v. 1. Prov. xxix. 24.

III. A most severe threatening is denounced against the person who taketh the name of the Lord in vain: "The Lord will not hold him guiltless," that is, he will surely punish him. The Lord doth not say what punishment he will inflict upon him, and therefore we may conclude that the greatest misery which we can imagine is threatened. Every sin renders a person guilty; for "cursed is he that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," as Paul speaks, Gal. iii. 10, from Deut. xxvii. 26. And God doth not hold any guilty person guiltless, as he himself saith, Exod. xxxiv. 7. Much less will he hold him who dishonoureth his name guiltless: "For there is no sin greater, or more provoking to God than the profaning of his name," saith the catechism. It is indeed "attacking" the name of God. Prov. xxx. 9. The Hebrew word for blaspheme, *nakab*, denotes to thrust the name of God through. On account of the horribleness of this sin it is called by a catachresis a blessing of God, as though it ought not to be named, 1 Kings xxi. 10. Job. i. 5, 11, unless we would rather understand by blessing God in that passage, forsaking him, and bidding him farewell, and so departing wickedly from him by breaking covenant with him. Job's wife seems to have used it in this sense, when she said to her husband, Job ii. 9, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? bless God and die,"* But however this may be, every sin is punishable, because it is contrary to the highness and glory of God: much more is this sin then punishable, since it is in itself a reproaching of the Lord: "God hath therefore commanded it to be punished with death," saith the instructor according to the word of God: "He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord shall be put to death; which sentence the Lord ordered to be executed upon "the son of an Israelitish woman." Lev. xxiv. 23. God being jealous for his holy name, poured out his wrath also in the most dreadful

* This is agreeable to the Dutch translation, and is the literal sense of the word in the original.

manner upon Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Belshazzar and others who blasphemed the name of God with cursing, perjury and rash swearing.

APPLICATION.

Is this so, hearers, how guilty then is our land in the sight of the Lord! if any person will walk through the land he will see that taking of the name of the God in vain, is become the sin of our land. What honest heart is not grieved, and what godly ear is not offended, when it percieves that the name of God is dishonoured in the most dreadful manner by blaspheming, by cursing, perjury, unnecessary swearing and all kinds of abominations? Behold how this is done by high and low, by old and young: travel by sea or by land, converse with our sailers and soldiers, traverse our streets, and lodge in our inns, and ye will perceive that all flesh hath corrupted its way, and that the fear of God is in few places. Yea, taking the name of God in vain, and abusing it, is become, as it were, a necessary custom, and wo to him who whispers aught against it. "The prudent man must keep silence, for it is" now also an evil time," as it was in the days of Amos, chap. v. 13. It is true, the magistrates have enacted severe laws against this horrible sin: but if they could secure themselves, and stop the mouths of audacious sinners, this evil would not prevail as it doth. We must therefore wonder at the longsuffering, the forbearance and goodness of God, which he displays in order to lead our people to repentance, that he doth not destroy our land But our wanton and dissolute people do not regard this, they despise the favours of the Lord; and therefore he doth not hold them guiltless They who have eyes to see, and hearts to understand, perceive how the wrath of the Lord is revealed time after time from heaven against this ungodliness; we will not speak now of scanty harvests, of dearths, of inundations, the bursting of dykes and dams, of war, without, or after a short intermission, upon war; see only how the Lord, after having marched forth with our armies in the last war year after year, hath at last "caused our sun to go down at noon, and darkened the earth in the clear day," as he threatens, Amos viii. 9 And who knows what the decree of God will yet bring forth against such an ungodly nation as we are? If

there were not still a remnant among us, according to the election of grace, we should have been like Sodom and Gomorrah.

It is true, the children of Belial do not regard the condition of the commonwealth, they are bold and speak boldly, they soothe and flatter themselves, when they hear the curses of the Lord. But know ye blasphemers, cursers, false and unnecessary swearers, the Lord is not your God, and he will not be called upon by you, nor permit you to take his name and covenant into your mouths, Psalm l 16. His wrath lieth upon you, he will not hold you guiltless, but punish you according to the measure of your wickedness. Should the Lord suffer you to proceed in your wickedness, without punishing you, he will bring your abominations and curses, uttered against yourselves and others with greater aggravation upon you, and with a recompence, after your death: surely "no blasphemers shall inherit the kingdom of God," as Paul speaks, 1 Cor. vi. 10, but everlasting fire, with their father the devil, who is a blasphemer. How will ye gnaw your tongues, which ye have so often abused by dishonouring God, for pain, in that fire! ye will then indeed curse and blaspheme God, but it will not be your element, any more than seething water is the element of fishes. It is no excuse, that ye do not use the name of God in blaspheming and cursing, but that ye speak only of the devil, and use other dreadful expressions; for ye call down such curses upon yourselves and upon your neighbour, from God, though they are uttered by you in a careless manner. It will avail you still less that ye do this from custom, and not from design; for ye show thus, that it is become your second nature to abuse the name of God, and that ye differ but little from the devil, who is by his very temper wicked and inclined to blaspheme.

But are ye, who are not so enormously wicked, guiltless? surely no: ye will see it, if ye only remember what God hath commanded and forbidden you here, and if ye will examine yourselves by it. Have ye entered with a holy dread into the covenant, and thought on God with a holy trembling? doth such a holy reverence possess your souls, when ye speak to and of him? Is it your endeavour to glorify and confess him with words and deeds, and that a holy awe for him may direct you in all your behaviour? Are ye strangers to blaspheming the name of God, to cursing, false and unnecessary swearing? are ye no dicers nor gamesters? have ye not abused the name of God in any respect, neither in nor out of the public worship? doth the fear of God restrain you from sinning? and is it intolerable to you, when he is dishonoured? in what doth it appear, and by what is it seen in you? put your hands into your bosoms

and see whether they will not come out leprous. Think not that ye have cleansed your hearts in this respect, and are pure of this sin, because ye are so blind, that ye do not know yourselves. Paul, before he was converted, blasphemed God, and he nevertheless knew not that he did it, as he confessed afterwards, when he was better enlightened, 1 Tim. i. 15. Yea, he compelled others to blaspheme, and thought that he did God service, Acts. xxvi. 9, 10, 11. Only attend to all your former doings, and ye will see that your whole life hath been altogether without and dishonourable to God. And it is therefore evident, that ye take his name in vain, that he is not your covenant God, that ye are guilty in his sight, and that he will not hold you guiltless.

Alas! that with the jailer, ye cried out with trembling, on account of your great guilt, "What must we do to be saved?" Ye would then learn how the Lord could hold you guiltless; for this would cause your souls to flee out of themselves to him, who suffered blasphemy, and on account of blasphemy. Endeavour not only to restrain your mouths from uttering such dreadful language, but also to be found wholly in Christ, and with "the Corinthians, who were before blasphemers, to be washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by the Spirit of God," as the apostle testifieth of them, 1 Cor. vi. 10, 11.

But, believers, ye also have frequently sinned against this commandment. Reflect only on your former behaviour, on all your free thoughts and words, your vain and dissolute conversation, and how ye have reproached God during your "ignorance and unbelief," like Paul 1 Tim. i. 13. Ye have laden yourselves with a heavy burthen of guilt, ye have seen it, and know how it oppressed you, and with what dreadful distress your souls were seized, when ye saw that God would not hold you guiltless; but ye have with Paul, "obtained mercy," 1 Tim. i. 13. God could not, and he nevertheless doth hold you guiltless: his Son hath atoned for your reproaching of the Lord in your stead: "The zeal of God's house did eat him up, and the reproaches of them who reproached the Lord fell on him," as he complains by the mouth of David, Psalm lxix. 9. Because ye had blasphemed God, the wicked accused him of blasphemy, and slew him on account of it: he purchased the covenant of grace for you, and "though he was just, he suffered for you, who were unjust, that he might bring you to God," 1 Peter iii. 18, and that the Lord might no more be wroth with you, "that he might make an everlasting covenant with you, that he would not turn away

from you to do you good, and that he would put his fear in your hearts, that ye might not depart from him." Jer. xxxii. Therefore,

1. Let your souls wonder and be amazed at the great and free grace, that hath been shown to you. Ye who were guilty are holden guiltless; the Son of God, who was guiltless, was holden guilty, and punished in your stead, and all grace is conveyed to you thereby: "For him who knew no sin hath God made to be sin for you, that ye might be made the righteousness of God in him," according to 2 Cor. v. 21. Why did not God lay the guilt of your blasphemy upon you, as well as upon others? It was only free grace. Behold it, wonder at it and rejoice, praise him on account of it, like Paul, when he saith, 1 Tim. i. 15, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

2. The name of the Lord is still often taken in vain by you: must ye not own it? ye know surely that his fear doth not always impress your hearts, as it ought; how often are ye but little influenced by it, as well when ye are engaged in the worship of the Lord, as when ye are not. Therefore the soul should, as often as she renders herself guilty, lay hold on the Son of God for reconciliation, and dip herself in the fountain of his blood, that she may be reconciled and cleansed. He is indeed "the opened fountain," which is always "open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness," Zech. xiii. 1.

3. Let it henceforward be your earnest endeavour, that the fear of the Lord your God may direct you in all your conversation, so that ye may not reproach, but glorify him: "If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear," 1 Peter i. 17.

The fear of God should restrain you from sinning, especially from scandalous sins, which induce men to blaspheme the name of God: "Shall not his excellency make you afraid, and his dread fall on you?" may we ask you with Job, ch. xiii. ii. Job himself refrained from sinning, because "destruction from God was a terrour to him; and by reason of his highness he could not endure," ch. xxxi. 23. So Joseph also acted, Gen. xxxix. 9, and Nehemiah, Neh. v. 15. An awe for God ought to restrain your tongues and mouths, and prevent you from "speaking so exceeding proudly, and from letting arrogancy come out of your mouths: for the Lord is a God of judgment," as Hannah admonisheth, 1 Sam. ii. 3. We ought to follow even our daily callings with "fear and trembling," as the apostle enjoins upon servants, Eph. vi. 5. Therefore plead the covenant

promise with the Lord, that "he would put his fear in your hearts," according to Jer. xxxii. 40.

4. Let every one of you opposehis neighbour, who takes the name of God in vain. This is also "an unfruitful work, which we ought to reprove," Eph. v. ii. This is the duty of every one, but it is especially the duty of all who are set over others, whether magistrates, parents, masters or mistresses. He who is silent, when he hears the name of God abused; renders himself guilty of that sin, because he assents to it by his silence: what man can say that the Lord is his God and Father, if his spirit be not vexed, when God is reproached? It is recorded, as an unheard of abomination, that "when Jehoiakim the king had cut Jeremiah's roll, and had burned it, no man was afraid, nor rent his clothes," on account of that action, Jer xxxiv. 23, 24 But whoever will rebuke another must see that he do it "in the spirit of meekness; considering himself, lest he also be tempted," Gal vi. 1. But if we have to do with the men of Belial, who are as sharp thorns, and who act and speak still more wickedly, when they are reproved, we must then forbear, and "not give the holy things to dogs nor cast our pearls before swine, lest at any time they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rent us," as Jesus adviseth, Matt. vii. 6. Solomon, his type gave the same lesson, Prov. ix. 7, 8. All that we can do then, is to manifest some token of displeasure, to withdraw, and complain to the Lord. See 2 Kings xviii. 36, 37. xix. 1.

Is any one, in the mean while, disturbed with blasphemous thoughts and injections, as it often happeneth to the children of God, let him not cherish them, but repel them from him, as he would shake coals of fire from his clothes, and the Lord will hold him guiltless, will honour him again, and his name will be precious to him, and be blessed among men: yea, he will bring honour, glory and thanksgiving to the name of the Lord his God for ever, when, according to Rev xxii. 4, 5, "he shall see the face of the Lord, and the name of God shall be upon his forehead, that he may be enlightened by him, and reign as a king for ever. Amen.

THE

GOOD AND EVIL

OATH.

XXXVII. LORD'S DAY.

Heb. vi. 16. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

Q. 102. *May we then swear religiously by the name of God?*

A. Yes; either when the magistrates demand it of the subjects, or when necessity requires of us thereby to confirm fidelity and truth, to the glory of God, and the safety of our neighbour; for such an oath is founded on the word of God, and was therefore justly used by the saints, both in the Old and New Testament.

Q. 102. *May we also swear by the saints or any other creature?*

A. No; for a lawful oath is calling upon God, as the only one, who knows the heart, that he will bear witness to the truth, and punish me, if I swear falsely; which honour is due to no creature.

"BE not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself overwise; why shouldest thou destroy thyself? Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish; why shouldest thou die before thy time?"

Thus speaks the wisest of kings, Eccl. vii. 16, 17. We cannot be too righteous, nor too wise: neither may we be in any respect wicked, or foolish. But when the wise man disapproves of an excess in these things, we must believe that he introduceth a wicked man, as speaking, who hath no delight in pure righteousness, and in heavenly wisdom, and who will not indulge neither in open villainy and folly, because it would be too detrimental to his temporal interest, which he considers as his God. Or Solomon requires with these words, that we should keep the middle way, and not turn aside to the right hand nor to the left, according to Prov. iv. 26, 27. The sinner turns easily aside to the right hand, that is, he becomes too righteous, or too wise by believing too much, and doing more than God commands him, "honouring God in vain, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," Matt. xv. 9. He will also attend too much to lighter matters, and neglect in the mean while the weightiest, like the Pharisees, "who tithed mint, anise and cummin, but omitted the weightier matters of the law," Matt. xxiii. 23. When sinful man will not do this, he will turn aside to the left hand, even become too wicked, and too foolish, and abandon himself to evil practices.

We ought to avoid such extremes, and to steer a direct course; the middle way is the safest, and in that we shall proceed with the greatest security. Therefore our reformed church, following the course of God's word abstains from the dangerous extremes of her adversaries. This appears in her doctrine concerning the justification of the sinner before God by faith only, but evidenced by good works; and she steers thus a direct course between the Papists, who being righteous overmuch, extol works too highly in this matter, and the Antinomians, who being wicked overmuch, dissolve all obligations to good works. So our purified church explains also the doctrine of the sacraments as signs and seals of the divine grace; which the Papists, as righteous overmuch, extol, as though they conferred grace by themselves; and which the Socinians, as wicked overmuch disparage, as though they were no more than bare signs of Christianity. Doth not our unblamableness appear also in our doctrine concerning a religious oath by the name of God? by which we avoid the doctrine of the Mennonites, who, as righteous overmuch, think that a Christian hath no right to swear at all; and of the Papists, who, as wicked overmuch, swear by the saints and other creatures, as we are taught here in this Lord's day. We have spoken before of vain and false oaths; we must

next consider whether we may swear at all, and if we may, whether we may swear by the creatures.

Two particulars require our consideration here,

I. The nature of an oath.

II. The controversy which we have with the Mennonites and Papists concerning oaths.

I. We know not how to describe an oath better than the instructor doth in the hundred and second question, in which he saith that it is "a calling upon God, that he, as the only one who knoweth the heart, will bear witness to the truth, and punish us if we swear falsely." In an oath there is,

1. Something supposed, to which men swear, either truth or fidelity. We swear to the truth of any thing, whether we ourselves, or others have spoken or done it, when we confirm by an oath that it hath truly happened, as we testify concerning it. Thus Obadiah swore to assure Elijah 1 Kings xviii. 10, "As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee; and when they said, he is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not." Or we swear to fidelity, when we swear that we will be faithful, and keep our word in promises, obligations and contracts, as Rahab caused the spies to swear, that they would save her, and her kindred alive, Joshua ii. 12—21. See this also in Jonathan and David, 1 Sam. xx 12—17. xxiv. 21, 22, 23.

2. As no man knows our heart, and as therefore no man knows whether we testify and promise according to truth, therefore we call upon God, that he, as the only one who knoweth the heart, would bear witness to the truth: "I call God for a record upon my soul," saith the apostle, 2 Cor. i. 23. And thus we appeal in an obscure matter to the allknowing God, as the Reubenites, Gadites, and half tribe of Manasseh did, in order to confirm that they had not builded their altar, to rebel against the Lord their God, saying Josh. xxii. 22, "The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, he knoweth," Yea, we pray to the Lord, that he would bear witness to the truth, and that he would make it known, that we speak the truth; which he doth by manifesting the matter, to which we have sworn in succeeding times, and by causing others to acquiesce in our oath, and also by blessing us, and giving us joy and peace of mind by his Spirit, upon our swearing, as the Lord bore witness to Paul, so that he could say, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost," Rom. ix. 10.

3. Though the Lord God knows when the sinner lies, and though he sometimes bears witness to the truth by punishing liars, by bringing reproach upon them, and destroying them, and therefore all men ought to lay aside lying, and to speak the truth with their neighbour, nevertheless a man ought to fear a false oath more than a lie, because in an oath he calls upon the allknowing God to manifest it, if he utter a lie, yea, "to punish him, if he swear falsely;" whereby he therefore declares, that he will look for no favour from God, that he will suffer all his judgments, and that he stakes and pledges all that is dear to him, if he do not speak the truth. Therefore they said of old, when they swore, "God do so to me and more also," Ruth i. 17. 1 Kings ii. 23. Yea, they cursed and execrated themselves with their oath, Matt. xxvi. 74. Acts xxiii 12, 13. And this is the reason why an oath is sometimes called a curse, Numb. v. 21. 1 Kings viii. 31. Although men do not always express in an oath the curse, which they wish themselves, nevertheless the most fearful curse is supposed.

4. The immediate design of an oath is the confirmation of truth and fidelity, which remains otherwise doubtful. Man is become through sin unbelieving, and unworthy to be believed: "He is indeed of his father the devil, who, when he speaketh a lie, speaketh it of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it," John viii. 44. But when we swear, we then render ourselves capable of being believed, and we are obliged to believe others upon their oath: "For men swear by the greater; and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife," according to our text; for we may not think that any man is so forgetful of God, that he would undertake to appeal to the allknowing, holy and righteous God, with the most dreadful execration of himself, and of all that is near and dear to him, in behalf of a lie and breach of trust. If any man be nevertheless so ungodly, we must notwithstanding be satisfied with his oath, because there is no other way to decide controversies, and the false swearer cannot injure others by his wicked oath, as much as he injures himself.

Sometimes a man himself utters an oath, in order to confirm truth and fidelity, and sometimes others utter an oath for him, to adjure and urge him by an oath, to speak the truth; thus Caiaphas adjured the Saviour to tell whether he were the Christ, the Son of God," Matt. xxvi. 63, 64. Thus Paul also did, 1 Thess. v. 27, "I adjure you by the Lord, that this epistle be read by all the holy brethren." To this pertains also the curse which he denounceth against all those, "who love not our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. xvi. 32. See also Exod. xiii. 19. Numb. v. 19—22.

II. Since then swearing is such a solemn work, that we thereby call the allknowing and righteous God to witness, and imprecate his judgments upon us, if we do not speak the truth, therefore the godly have with good reason feared an oath. Solomon, distinguishing the ungodly from the righteous, saith that the former "sweareth," but that the latter "feareth an oath," Eccl. ix. 2. Therefore the instructor asks with propriety, "whether we may swear religiously by the name of God." The Essenes among the Jews, and also certain ancient Christians thought that it was unlawful to swear, and the Mennonites hold the same opinion at this day; but the instructor answers that an oath is lawful. If we shall explain this question properly, we must know that the dispute is not whether they might swear under the Old Testament; for these men will not deny that: but whether we may swear under the New Testament: neither, whether we may swear vainly, but religiously: not whether we may swear at all times, but whether when the magistrates require it of their subjects, or when other circumstances render it necessary, in matters of importance, when we cannot obtain satisfactory evidence, or testimonies sufficient to determine differences between man and man.

The Mennonites deny that we may swear in such cases, but we maintain the affirmative, because

1. Swearing in this manner is founded on the word of God, in which we are commanded not only "to fear the Lord, and to serve him, but also to swear by his name," Deut. vi. 13. x. 20. It is true, this was under the Old Testament; but there is no reason why God should forbid it now under the New Testament, since swearing doth not belong either to the civil, or to the ecclesiastical law of the Jews. It was also foretold of believers under the New Testament, that they should swear by the Lord, and their whole worship is expressed by the figure of swearing: "In that day," saith the prophet, "shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts," Isaiah xix. 18. See also Isaiah xlv. 23. lxv. 16. Jer. xii. 16.

2. The saints of the Old and New Testament have made use of oaths rightly. It is unnecessary to collect many examples of the Old Testament saints who swore, since the dispute relates only to the New Testament. And surely the saints of the New Testament have sworn. The Head of the saints, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was made a priest by an oath of the Father, suffered himself to be adjured by Caiaphas, Matt. xxvi. 63, 64. Paul "called God to record upon his soul," 2 Cor. i. 23. Philip. i. 8. He also "adjured

the Thessalonians, that they should see that his epistle was read by all the holy brethren," 1 Thess v. 27. How would he have dared to do this, if it had been forbidden him?

3. Further, an oath is often necessary on account of the weighty controversies, which happen between man and man, and on account of contracts, which men make one with another. How shall men believe one anothers testimony and promise, and truth and fidelity be confirmed? must it not be by an oath? therefore the text saith, "An oath for confirmation is to men an end of all strife." Would yea and nay suffice to believe one another without scruple? Are not "all men then liars?" Psalm cxvi. 11. Rom. iii. 4. Or will the truth of the Mennonitish men and women satisfy us? why do they then make use of Mennonitish tricks and ambiguous expressions to deceive their neighbours? can they show us men and women of their sect, who are so true, that they never lie? and what is their affirmation by the truth of men and women, but an implicit oath, by which they engage their honour as true men, with an oath, and desire that God should expose them to shame, if they do not speak the truth?

4. How can an oath be forbidden in the New Testament, when it conduceth to the glory of God, and to the salvation of our neighbour? By an oath a person protests in a solemn manner, that God is true, allknowing, righteous and almighty, and he calls upon him as such, with a fear and dread of his wrath. The honour, the property, the life and salvation of our neighbour is at stake, if either he himself, or some other cannot deliver him by an oath; shall it then be deemed sinful? How is this to be endured?

Let none object here the words of Christ Matt. v. 34, 37. "But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for, &c. But let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil," which is briefly repeated by James, James v. 12. These texts do not surely favour the opinion of the Mennonites; for they make use of more than yea and nay, when they confirm their words by the truth of their men and women. Christ himself made use of more than yea and nay; for he often confirmed his words with a double verily: therefore we may say more than yea and nay in matters of importance. But when he saith, Swear not at all he opposes the false glosses of the old Pharisees, who made the law of God of no effect by their traditions. This is evident from the whole chapter; for Jesus forbids us to "break even the least of God's commandments," as 19. He teacheth that "our righteousness

must exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees," vs. 20. They had taught that "men ought to love their neighbours, but that they might hate their enemies." vs. 43, which was contrary to the law, Prov. xxiv. 29. xxv 21, 22. They also persuaded themselves and others, that only false oaths were forbidden, but not vain ones: yea, they thought that they might swear by the creatures, and even by mean creatures, and moreover, that they were not bound by such oaths, as the Saviour plainly shows. Matt. v. 33—37. xxiii. 16—22. Jesus as the best expositor of God's, yea, of his own law, opposes these expositions. It is true, that what is more than yea, and nay, cometh of evil; but an oath doth not therefore come of evil; for how could God himself then have sworn, and commanded oaths? Christ would not then have suffered himself to be adjured, nor the saints of the Old and New Testament have made use of oaths; but that which is more than yea and nay is a vain oath by the creatures, and a false oath; for Satan, the evil one, first swore a vain and false oath; see Gen. iii. 5. It cometh also of evil, that men cannot be believed on account of their yea and nay, but are liars, and are therefore obliged to confirm their words with an oath: See John viii. 44.

The Mennonites are so scrupulous with respect to oaths; but the Papists proceed to as great an extreme of lightness and trifling with them, when they venture to swear by the saints and by other creatures. This abomination we justly condemn with the instructor, and that our reasons for condemning it may be the more forcible, and that we may unsinew the principle arguments of our adversaries against us, we will explain the subject of this controversy somewhat more particularly. The question is not, whether we may not pledge or stake a beloved object in our oath, to confirm truth and fidelity, as Paul did "his rejoicing which he had in Christ Jesus," 1 Cor. xv. 31. We may not disapprove of this, because we submit ourselves in an oath to the divine punishment, if we swear falsely: neither is the dispute here whether we may not confirm truth, or fidelity by something, of which every one is certain, as Joseph confirmed his assertion by the life of Pharaoh, of which every one was conscious, 1 Cor. xv. 31, unless we would consider Joseph's words, as a pledging of the life of Pharaoh, which was very dear to him. See also 1 Sam. i. 26. xvii. 55 xx 3 xxv. 26. In what sense soever it be taken, we will not condemn it. Neither do we dispute with our adversaries whether we may not make a strong protestation before creatures, who are present, and can be witnesses of what we affirm; for Moses made such a protestation before "heaven and

earth," Deut. xxx. 19, and Paul "protested before the elect angels," 1 Tim. v. 21. Or if we would consider this protestation before the angels, as an oath, to adjure Timothy, and oblige him to keep the commandment, then we must look upon those creatures, as instruments of God's anger against the disobedient; and so this protestation is, as it were, an urging of a person to his duty by the denunciation of a curse, as the apostle did, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. That we may appeal in this manner to the creatures in an oath we will not deny. And so the question between us and the Papists is, whether we may call upon, or pray to any creature religiously, to bear witness concerning any secret matter, and to punish us judicially, if we swear falsely. The Papists say that this is lawful, but we deny it for the most weighty reasons. For

1. We may not pray to the saints, nor to any other creatures, as we have proved on the first commandment; and besides this, swearing by the creatures is contrary to the nature of an oath, because that supposeth an allknowing, righteous and almighty supreme Judge, to whom we appeal, that he may bear witness to the truth, and punish us, if we swear falsely, as we have proved before. Now since it is certain, that no creature possesses these perfections, how can we then presume to swear by the saints, or by other creatures?

2. Swearing by the creatures is condemned, threatened and punished by God, as a grievous sin. He saith, Jer. v. 7. "How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forsaken me and sworn by them that are no gods." Hear what a dreadful judgment the Lord threatens to inflict on "the fair virgins and young men of Israel, even that they should faint for thirst, because they swore by the sin of Samaria, and said, Thy God, O Dan, liveth, and the manner of Beersheba liveth: they should fall and not rise up again." Amos viii. 13, 14. It is recorded as an abomination, that the Jews "swore by the Lord and by Malcham," Zeph. i. 5.

The Papists endeavour in vain to defend their idolatrous swearing with the oath of Jacob "by the fear of his father Isaac," Gen. xxxi. 53; for that oath of Jacob is opposed to the idolatrous oath of Laban, by "the god of Abraham, the god of Nahor, and the god of their father." Those gods were idols, which Abraham served before his conversion. See Joshua xxiv. 2. Therefore the fear of Isaac was the true God, who was with him, and helped him, vs. 42. as the Lord God is often called "the fear and dread" of his people, Isaiah viii. 13, the act being put for the object of the act by a metonymy, because the Lord, the object of the fear, is worthy to be feared.

The Papists object further the words of the Saviour from Matt. xxiii. 16—22 "Wo unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor, &c. Whosoever shall swear by the temple sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon." They conclude from this, that we may swear by the creatures, and particularly by those, that are dedicated to God, because they represent God. The Saviour doth not however teach this; but, among other things, that the Pharisees, by pledging and engaging the temple and altar in their oaths, as precious things, swore by God, as the Judge, that he might punish them in those things, and that they were therefore bound by such oaths. This text doth not therefore militate against our opinion, since we do not disapprove of submitting creatures, which are dear to us, to the judgment of God. Neither is this the subject of our controversy, but whether we may call on the saints and other creatures, in secret matters, to bear witness, and to be judges, in order that they may punish us, if we swear falsely: and therefore this text is not applicable here.

The swearing of the Papists by the saints and other creatures is not the only mistake, which they commit with respect to oaths, but also, that they, especially the Jesuits, allow that men may make use of doublemeaning words, and mental reservations in swearing; whereby they utter a word, which may be understood in a twofold sense, in one sense, and keep the other sense to themselves: or when they utter words, which have only one simple sense, but intend some limitation of it in their own minds. For instance, we ask a Popish priest, whether he is a priest, and he, seeing that he would expose himself to danger by an honest confession, answers no, but with this reservation and tacit limitation, I am not a priest of Baal, or, I am not a priest to tell you that I am.

But the saints did not act so, for "they renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, and walked not in craftiness," 2 Cor. iv. 2. They would rather suffer the most painful deaths, than rescue themselves by such miserable shifts. The citizen of Zion "doth not swear deceitfully," Psalm xxiv. 4. God condemned the conduct of his people in "not swearing in truth and righteousness," Isaiah xlviii. 1. It is also abominable: for by this mean a person deceives with an oath, which is required, in order to prevent all kinds of deceit: he increases disputes, contrary to the nature of an oath, Heb. vi. 16. All truth and fidelity is thus abolished, good neighbourhood

is destroyed, and the Jesuits compel us to discredit their words and their oaths for ever; yea, this is such a sin, that they are ashamed of their opinion, they will conceal it, and even deny it

This filth cannot be cloked with the words of Abraham, who said that Sarah his wife was his sister, Gen. xx. 2, nor with the declaration of Samuel, who gave out that he was come to Bethlehem, in order to offer sacrifice to the Lord, when it was his intention to anoint David, 1 Sam. xvi. 1—5. But if these men sinned, must we therefore imitate them? They also spoke the truth; for Sarah was indeed the sister of Abraham, Gen. xx. 12, and Samuel did indeed go to Bethlehem, in order that he might sacrifice: but they did not utter the whole truth, which we are not always obliged to do: we may utter one truth, and suppress another. See Jer. xxxviii. 24—27.

It is not less hateful in the Papists, to teach that men are not obliged to keep their oaths with heretics, by which means these men have turned the world into a shambles. When the emperour Sigismund had promised John Hus a safe conduct, in order that he might appear without danger at the council of Constance, that ecclesiastical assembly enacted a law, that men should not be bound to keep faith with heretics, and they condemned him to be burned, contrary to the word of the emperour. But the Israelites acted differently from this with the Gibeonites, when they spared them on account of their plighted oath, although the Gibeonites had deceived the Israelites, and had obtained an oath from them by deceit, Joshua ix. When Saul, in his mad zeal for the children of Israel, had put them to death, the Lord revenged the slaughter many years after upon Israel, and ordered it to be revenged on the family of Saul, 2 Sam. xxi. It matters not to whom, but by whom we swear; but the Papists render themselves so detestable, that no man dares to trust them, either upon their word, or their oath.

Two questions arise here: first, whether we may require an oath from an idolater, who swears by that which is no God? It is certain that we may enter into covenants with persons, who are not of the same faith with ourselves, yea, who are idolaters, in order to maintain good neighbourhood. But inasmuch as it is dangerous to depend, in such momentous cases, upon the single word of the idolater, it becomes therefore necessary to require an oath of him. Now as he will not swear by any one but his idol, since he looks upon his idol to be a God, and thus reckons himself as much bound by such an oath as if he had sworn by the true God, there is therefore no reason why we should not require an oath of him; doth he commit a sin, it will lie at his own door: others, who earnestly de-

sire that he should swear by the true God, do not become guilty of his sin. The saints did not therefore scruple to enter into covenants, confirmed by oaths, with idolaters, see this in Isaac, Gen. xxvi. 26—31, and in Jacob, Gen. xxxi 53. The other question is, how far we are bound by an oath, in which we have promised fidelity. It is not to be doubted, but that we may break a wicked oath, by which we have bound ourselves to do a moral evil, as David broke his unadvised oath against the life of Nabal, 1 Sam. xxv. for we do otherwise commit a double sin, like Herod, who, being moved by the idle dancing of the daughter of Herodias, promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she should ask, and when she asked for the head of John the Baptist, he ordered that that holy man should be beheaded, on account of his oath, Matt. xiv. 1—11. But every other oath by which we obligate ourselves to do things, that are not sinful, but allowable, we ought to fulfil punctually, although it should be to our own hurt; for "he who abides in the tabernacle of God, and dwells in his holy hill, changes not, although he have sworn to his own hurt," Psalm xv. 1—4. Oaths which have been sworn to confirm a mutual contract, ought to be kept on both sides; but if one party break his contract, and therefore his oath, the other party is then discharged and freed from his oath, because it depends upon the condition, that his confederate will be faithful, and because he is rendered incapable of keeping his word and his oath. The words of Paul apply here, 1 Cor. vii. 15. "If the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases."

APPLICATION.

But, hearers, if any of you have ever been called upon to make oath, and have sworn either once, or repeatedly, it behooves you to consider your ways, and to look back on your former behaviour, in order to reflect on your conduct. Permit me to bring you to yourselves, and to propose certain questions to you: (a) When ye swore, did ye know the nature of an oath? did ye apprehend that ye appealed to an allknowing, true, righteous, and almighty Judge, and called upon him to punish you, if ye swore falsely? were your souls seized with a holy trembling before his dreadful majesty, when ye lifted up your hands, and said, "So help me Almighty God?"

Again, (b) When ye swore to confirm your testimony, did ye know certainly, and without doubting, that it was true? when ye promised any thing upon an oath, did ye know that it was in your power punctually to fulfil your promise? were your hearts fully determined, and had ye a steadfast resolution to perform all that ye promised? Let no man flatter himself, thinking, I knew indeed that it was not possible for me to perform all that was required of me, and I purposed to do as much as was possible for me; for ye ought to have said so, and ye would not then have been permitted to swear. We may not swear with such a tacit condition, and with such a mental reservation. Permit me to ask you this one question also, (c) Have ye kept your oath? have ye performed it in every respect? hath the fear of the high God, by whom ye swore, restrained you from doing aught, that was contrary to what ye promised?

What think ye, hearers? can ye say yea to all this with a well-assured mind? Be then also assured, that the Lord hath a special delight in your oath, and in your performance of it, and that he will bless you in the work of your hands: but can ye not answer yea to this question? and have ye, being ignorant of the importance of an oath, sworn only in a careless manner, not certainly knowing whether that which ye affirmed were true, and only with a design to deliver yourselves, or your friend from a danger, or to injure your enemy? and when ye had bound yourselves with an oath to be faithful in this or that affair, did ye not know that it was possible for you, and had ye not then a steadfast resolution to perform what ye swore? had ye no other view than to obtain an office, or some other emolument? and did ye not think much of breaking your oath for the sake of some advantage? know then that ye cannot be numbered among the citizens of Zion; for "they do not swear deceitfully," Psalm xxiv. 4. Surely ye are abominably wicked; for this is recorded as a grievous abomination of Zedekiah, which he added to all his other sins, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 12, 13. "He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord. And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who made him swear by God." Ye have "profaned the name of God by your false swearing," Lev. xix. 12, for ye have denied that God was allknowing, true, righteous and almighty; ye have made a false witness of him, and prayed for your own damnation, and destruction. Can there be a more horrible sin? is not this a bond of many and mischievous iniquities? ye are therefore justly reckoned as "perjured," among "lawless persons, disobedient, ungodly, sinners, unholy, profane, murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, whoremongers, those who defile themselves with man-

kind," and among "menstealers," 1 Tim. i. 10. What think ye? will God hold you guiltless, when ye yourselves have appealed to his justice? surely, "the Lord will not hold him guiltless, who taketh his name in vain," Exod. xx. 7. Hear what the Lord God saith of the perjured king Zedekiah, Ezek, xvii. 18, 19. "He despised the oath by breaking the covenant, (when lo, he had given his hand) since he hath done all these things, he shall not escape. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, as I live, surely my oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompense upon his own head." The Lord saith also, Zech. v. 1—4, "that he will bring the roll of the curse, the length whereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth ten cubits, into the house of him who hath sworn falsely by his name, that it may remain there, to consume it, with the timber thereof, and with the stones thereof."

Do ye ask, if there be then no way for you to escape the judgment of God? We say, yes: only let my counsel be acceptable to you, (a) Break off your sins of perjury, and begin henceforth to perform and keep your oath. Have ye been confirmed in any office, by an oath, and are ye unable to execute it according to your oath, give that office up, although ye should become poor; for ye may not retain it, when ye cannot execute it without perjury. It is better to be poor and needy without such sins, than to become rich with those sins; there is indeed no way to deliver your precious souls from destruction, as long as ye do not break off sin; "Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well: Come then, and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," Isaiah I 16, 17, 18. Seek pardon for the abomination of breaking your oath from God in Christ, "who is set forth to you to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare the righteousness of God," Rom. iii. 25. He was obliged to suffer also the profane swearing of Caiaphas, and to satisfy for the false oaths of his elect; if he had not done this, Peter would not have been accepted and saved by him. It is therefore absolutely necessary for you to lay hold of him as he is offered to you in his satisfaction by the Father, and thus to make peace with God, Isaiah xxvii. 4, 5.

We ought also to exhort the magistrates, who are appointed to exact oaths of their subjects, when necessity requires, that they be not too forward to demand an oath. They ought surely not to admit children, brainsick, or treacherous persons, or those who are infa-

mous on account of their dishonest conduct to an oath; for such persons cannot swear without profaning the name of God. Neither should those who are set over others urge any person to swear, unless in important cases, and such as are possible, and then only, when necessity requires. And not even then, except after preceding instructions and admonitions; for otherwise vain and false oaths will be multiplied, and the magistrates will render themselves guilty of the sins of others.

Let every one also fear an oath; swearing by the name of God is indeed a solemn work; let none therefore proceed lightly to an oath; a godly man "feareth an oath," as Solomon saith, Eccl. ix. 1. Therefore, hearers, "be not rash with your mouths, neither let your hearts be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and ye upon earth," Eccl. v. 2. But when the magistrates demand it, or it is otherwise necessary, then swear: yet with a holy fear for God, with a holy frame of heart, and with an assurance, that the matter to which ye swear is the truth, and that it is possible for you; and swear also plainly, and directly, without clokes of shame, and thus "in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness," according to the divine command, Jer. iv. 2. See also that ye keep your oath, which ye have sworn for the confirmation of fidelity, and that ye change not, though it were to your hurt.

Must we swear fidelity to men, much more must we then to God and to his Son. It was foretold, Isaiah xix. 18, that "five cities in the land of Egypt should speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts." The Messiah saith, Isaiah xlv. 23. "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." God offers now to all people his well ordered covenant, promising all grace to the sinner. Hear how the Son of God calls to you all, Isaiah lv. 3. "Incline your ear and come unto me, hear and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." We must assent to this covenant, must enter into it, and engage that we will be the Lord's, and do his will, and thus "say, I am the Lord's, and call ourselves by the name of Jacob and Israel, yea, subscribe to it, as it were, with our hand," Isaiah xlv. 5. And to prove that we do this with a perfect heart, we must with David, Psalm cxix. 106, "swear that we will keep God's righteous judgments, and we must perform our oath." Yea, we must confirm it in a solemn manner, as it were, with an oath of cursing, like Israel, "who entered into the covenant of the Lord, and into his curse," Deut. xxix. 12. I wish

that I could say of you all, that ye had thus bound yourselves and sworn to the Lord in truth, and with a perfect heart, like "all Judah, who rejoiced at the oath; for all the Jews had sworn with their whole heart, and sought the Lord with their whole desire, and he was found of them," 2 Chron. xv. 15. Let none refuse this great and blessed duty; ye are all bound by nature to do the will of the Lord. Ye have been outwardly surrendered into the covenant of God by your baptism, and have been obliged thereby, as by a military oath, "to cleave to the Triune God, to trust in him and love him, to forsake the world, crucify your nature, and walk in a new and holy life." Is it your mind to renounce and to make void that oath? If ye will not do this, but abide by your oath, enter then solemnly into his covenant, and swear to the Lord. Is there any one who knows his indwelling corruption, and is he fearful, that he will prove unfaithful, and doth this deter him from swearing in such a manner to the Lord, let him know that he enters into this covenant at the expence of free grace, and of all the promises of the covenant, and that the Lord hath said, that "he would put his fear into the heart of him who is in covenant with him, that he may not depart from him," Jer. xxxii. 40. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Sins, which we oppose and lament, will not annul the covenant Hear what the Lord saith of you, who desire to be faithful, Psalm lxxxix, 31—34. "If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips," Yea, God confirms this word of his by an oath, Heb. vi. 17, 18. "God willing to show unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us." Amen.

THE

FOURTH COMMANDMENT

EXPLAINED.

XXXVIII. LORD'S DAY.

Exodus xx. 8—11. Remember the sabbathday to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbathday, and hallowed it.

Q. 103. *What doth God require in the fourth command?*

A. First, that the ministry of the gospel, and the schools be maintained; and that I, especially on the sabbath, that is, on the day of rest, diligently frequent the church of God, to hear his word, to use the sacraments, publicly to call upon the Lord, and contribute to the relief of the poor, as becomes a Christian: secondly, that all the days of my life I cease from my evil works, and yield myself to the Lord, to work by his holy Spirit in me: and thus begin in this life the holy sabbath.

"TO every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:" thus speaks Solomon, Eccl. iii. 1. We cannot do all things at all times, but every work must be done in its proper and appointed season: "There is a time to be born, and a time to die," &c. as the same wise man saith in the sequel of his discourse. The only wise God hath appointed a particular time for every matter: either by the order and nature of things: thus "there is a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted," vs. 2: or by his decree and powerful direction, "making every thing beautiful in its season," vs. 11: or by his commandment: and so there is a time to repent; "the Lord gave such a time to the woman Jezabel," Rev. ii. 21. There is also a time for public worship, which the Lord prescribes to man by his sovereign right to command, as all the festivals of the Old Testament, and particularly every seventh day of the week, which the Lord hath enjoined on his people in the fourth commandment.

If there be aught, that is in any respect equitable, it is particularly that we should worship God and him only. Therefore the great Lawgiver hath enjoined this, as the principal thing, in the first commandment; but inasmuch as we do not worship him in a suitable manner, when we do not worship him conformably to his spiritual nature, therefore he requires in the second commandment, that we should worship him in spirit and in truth without images. Since now the Lord is incomparably glorious, therefore he requires also in the third commandment, that we should worship him with a holy reverence and godly fear. Inasmuch now as it is not enough, that each one of us should worship him separately from others, in private, but since he ought to be worshipped also publicly in the congregation of the righteous, therefore the Lord hath appointed a certain season for this purpose in the fourth commandment, saying, "Remember the sabbathday," &c.

As it is necessary to say much on this fourth commandment, we will consider briefly by way of explanation,

I. The demand of the commandment.

II. The explanatory paraphrase of it.

III. The motives or reasons with which it is enforced.

I. The brief demand of the commandment is, "Remember the sabbathday." Sabbath is a Hebrew word, signifying rest, and therefore sabbathday is a day of rest. The Lord appointed many sabbaths, or seasons of resting in the time of the Old Testament, as (a) the sabbath of years, being every seventh, and every fiftieth year.

in which the land should rest, and not be ploughed nor sown, Lev. xxv. 1—16. (b) The sabbath of months, to wit, every first day of the month, Numb. xxviii. 11. (c) The sabbath of weeks, to wit, the three great festivals of the passover, pentecost and tabernacles, upon which all Israel ought to come up for worship, and rest a whole week, Exod. xxiii. 15, 16. Deut. xvi. 13. (d) The sabbath of days, which lasted but one whole day. Such was the first day of the seventh month, with which the civil year of Israel began, Lev. xxiii. 24. The day of atonement was also ordained to be a day of rest, Lev. xvi. 31, and especially the seventh day of the week: this is the sabbath spoken of in the fourth commandment.

With respect to this sabbathday we are commanded (a) "to keep it holy," (or to sanctify it.) It is known that sanctifying common things signifieth, according to the word of God, in the first place, to set them apart from their common use for the service of God, as the Israelites ought "to sanctify all their firstborn" to the Lord, Exod. xiii. 2. And so to sanctify the sabbath denotes to set it apart from the other days, which had a common use, for a religious service: but the word sanctify denotes also in this place to devote this day to holy purposes, and particularly to public worship: "Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, a holy convocation," saith the Lord, Lev. xxiii. 3. On that day the sacrifices were to be doubled, Numb. xxviii. 9, 10. The law was then also read, Acts xv. 21, psalms were sung, Psalm xcii. 1. And they delighted themselves in the Lord, Isaiah lviii. 13. And therefore we may not say that the Sabbath requires, with respect to the essence of it, only a bodily rest and leisure. Since now the Lord earnestly desires that his people should sanctify the sabbath, therefore he commands them also (b) "to remember" the sabbath, to keep it holy, supposing that this sabbath was known and instituted before, and not first in the wilderness, upon occasion of the manna: for we find in Exod. xvi. no institution, but only an account of a sabbath, which had been instituted before, and was known to the people, who gathered therefore on the sixth day bread for two days, as Moses declared that the people had done on account of the instituted sabbath. See Exod. xvi. 22, 23. And therefore we conceive that the sabbath was instituted, Gen. ii. 2, 3. For God derives no reason for the fourth commandment, from the manna, Exod. xvi. but from his own rest and injunction before the fall. Israel ought now to "remember" the sabbathday to keep it holy, that is, they ought to set their hearts upon it to keep it holy, as the Lord saith, Mal. iv. 4. "Remember the law of Moses." Remembering denotes here also, disposing and preparing ourselves for the sabbath;

Israel had for this purpose "a day of preparation," Luke xxiii. 54. This command concerning "remembering" the sabbathday to keep it holy is also a warning against profaning that day, and is as much, as "take heed," that ye keep it holy Would we have more, this "remembering" the sabbath to keep it holy signifies also keeping the sabbath, as it is said, Esther ix. 28, "that the days of purim should be remembered and kept." Therefore the Lord saith, Deut. v. 12, "Keep the sabbathday to sanctify."

II. Inasmuch now as the sabbath would be greatly profaned by doing any servile work on it, therefore the Lord God requireth that we should labour and do all our works in six days, commanding us to finish all our daily business in six days, and to leave nothing to be done on the sabbath; "for the seventh day," saith he, "is the sabbath of the Lord thy God." I have not the least doubt, that this seventh day is our Saturday, the seventh day after the creation, as appears plainly from the reasons annexed to this commandment: for God rested on the seventh day after the creation, and gave it to Adam for a day of rest, Gen. iii. 23. No man who is not prepossessed with a prejudice, that the saboath of the fourth commandment was a shadow of good things to come, will think that the seventh day was called the Lord's day, because Christ should rest on that day in the grave: for it is evident from the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment, that it was so called, because God rested on it, and because he instituted it for his worship, as the second sacrament of the New Testament is called "the Lord's supper," 1 Cor. xi. 20. On this day they might "not do any work." It is certain that the work of divine worship is not forbidden here, nor works of charity, nor of necessity, nor of common civility: but only those that belong to our sixdays calling, as all fieldworks of ploughing and reaping, Exod. xxxiv. 21, marketworks of buying and selling, Neh. x. 31. xii. 15—22, streetworks, as bearing and carrying burthens, Jer. xvii. 20, and thus also every work that belongs to our daily calling. And therefore "we may not do our own ways, nor find our own pleasure, nor speak even one word of these things," Isaiah lviii. 13. And this might not be done by any person, neither by parents nor by children, nor by bond, nor by free, nor by natives, nor by foreigners, nor by rational, nor irrational creatures: therefore the Lawgiver saith, "In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter," &c.

III. But what should induce a human being to keep the sabbathday holy? the command of the sovereign God ought to suffice him.

Yet that he who is naturally backward to keep God's commandment, may become willing and ready, the Lord offers him powerful motives. (1) from his own example: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and he rested the seventh day" This hath been briefly explained on the ninth Lord's day. Now when the Lord proposeth to Israel his great work and his rest, he shows them that he commands them to keep the sabbath in remembrance of his creation, and also that he requires that they should imitate him in his resting; for "therefore the Lord blessed the sabbathday and hallowed it." To bless and to hallow the sabbathday is to hallow it for a special blessing, which God will bestow on that day upon those who keep it, and so to separate and institute it for himself, and for his holy service, as "God sanctified Aaron and his sons, so that they might minister to him in the priest's office," Exod. xxix. 44. And it was thus the sabbathday of the Lord, and so the example of God, his blessing and hallowing of the sabbath is the ground and reason of the command concerning the sabbath. God blessed and hallowed the sabbath, not when he gave the manna in the wilderness, Exod. xvi. for we do not find that blessing and hallowing there; but when he rested before the fall, as is related, Gen. ii. 2, 3. It is said by some, that Gen. ii. 3, is an anticipated account of that which should have happened afterwards in the wilderness; but the history of Moses doth not suggest the least occasion or necessity for such an opinion. Neither may we say in order to deny the morality of the sabbath, that God blessed not only the seventh day, but also therewith all the following days; for then the blessing would not be a reason why men ought to hallow every seventh day. (2) God added to this reason afterwards another, which had a special respect to Israel, for he saith, Deut. v. 14, 15, "That thy manservant, and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand, and a stretched out arm; therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day." Both superiors and inferiors were oppressed with a grievous bondage in the land of Egypt; but the Lord had delivered them all with power. Therefore it behooved superiors to be, after the example of the Lord, merciful and kind to their servants, and to permit them also to rest from their labours on the sabbathday, and "to be refreshed," Exod. xxiii. 12.

This fourth commandment hath been a subject of controversy with those who were within the church, as well as with those who were without. The Jews think that the commandment concerning

observing the seventh day after the creation, with all the ceremonial additions to it, is everlasting, and can never be abrogated. But then the seventh day ought to flow from the essence of God; for whatever doth not flow therefrom can be abrogated. The Socinians, Mennonites and others assert that Christ hath, as a new Lawgiver, wholly abrogated the fourth commandment, and that we are not bound any longer to observe a weekly sabbath. There are two principal opinions in the church: the one, that this commandment is ceremonial, and therefore abrogated under the New Testament; the other, that it is moral, and that Christians are still bound to observe it.

In order that we may understand this difference rightly, we must know what we must understand by ceremonial, and what by moral. A thing is ceremonial, when it is a type, that is, when it shadows forth Christ, and his benefits, and must cease with his coming; or it is ceremonial, as far as it is an outward usage of the church, which conduceth to a proper ordering of religious worship, as preaching with our head uncovered, sprinkling thrice in baptism, and celebrating the Lord's supper sitting. A thing is also moral in a twofold respect; it is moral, when it hath an inward virtuousness, flowing from the essence of God, the reverse of which God cannot either command or permit with pleasure, as to love God; and in this respect the first, second, and third commandments are moral. Or a thing is moral, when it is virtuous only because God, according to his free and sovereign will, commands it for an everlasting rule, the reverse of which he might nevertheless also command. That God can command or forbid a thing to be an everlasting rule, which nevertheless flows not from his nature, will not be gainsaid, when it is considered, that God hath a sovereign authority, and that he hath actually forbidden and commanded several matters, which do not flow from his nature; for instance, God forbids us to marry with our kindred, and yet the sons of Adam were obliged to marry their sisters. If now the commandment, which forbids incest, flowed from the essence of God, he would not then have permitted it; for he could have created two human couples, who were not related one to the other, and could have ordered their children to marry each other. Can any man deny that baptism and the Lord's supper are enjoined on the church of the New Testament for everlasting ordinances; but they nevertheless do not flow from the holy essence of God.

We shall now be able to apprehend in what sense divines call the fourth commandment ceremonial or moral. They who call it ceremonial mean that it is typically ceremonial, and that Israel declared,

by observing it, (a) that their works were unclean, and that the purification from sin was not yet accomplished; (b) that sanctification from the guilt of sin should be accomplished by the sacrifice of Christ; (c) that Christ, having effected this, should rest from that work on the sabbath in the grave, and (d) that there should be a rest under the New Testament from the burthensome ceremonial service. From which it therefore necessarily follows, that the fourth commandment is now abrogated, like the other ceremonial laws, and that the keeping of the sabbath is injurious to the gospel.

They who look upon the fourth commandment to be moral do not say that the seventh day, either after the creation, or after the six workingdays, flows from the holy nature of God, but that it is given to the church for an everlasting ordinance by God, as an absolute sovereign, and that this command is thus still obligatory on us now under the New Testament. And that they may not engage in a mere strife about words, nor dispute at random, they distinguish between the sabbath, as it is enjoined in the fourth commandment, and between the circumstances and appendages, which God, agreeably to the nature of the legal economy of the Old Testament, annexed to the sabbath, and which related to the Jews only; as many particular ceremonial and civil commandments, enjoined upon Israel in the books of Moses, must be referred in one way or other to this or that commandment of the ten commandments, and are nevertheless distinct from the ten commandments as moral. Thus we must refer the law of ceremonies to the second commandment, which determines the manner of divine worship, as an appendage of that command; and the civil law hath its foundation in the fifth command: thus also the command which forbids adultery had its appendages under the Old Testament, as the manner in which they should detect and punish adultery. And so the fourth commandment had also its appendages, which, as being ceremonial, obliged the Jews only: for instance, (a) that they should observe particularly the seventh day after the creation; thus also the second article of the synod of Dordt speaks concerning the sabbath; for that did not affect the essence of the fourth commandment, since that day was commanded, only because the first sabbathday happened on the first seventhday after the creation. It is indeed evident, that they they did not observe the seventh day after the time of Joshua, when "the sun and moon stood still about a whole day," Joshua x. 13, nor after the time of Hezekiah, when "the sun returned ten degrees, by the degrees, in which it was gone down," Isaiah xxxviii. 8. (b) That Israel should double their sacrifices on the sabbath, (c) That God superadded

to this certain motives, which related to Israel only; as the promise of a long life in the land of Canaan was added to the fifth commandment, as a motive to that people; so God gives in the repetition of the law, Deut v. a motive derived from the deliverance of Israel out of the Egyptian bondage, to induce them to suffer their bondmen also to rest on the sabbathday. (d) "the strict observance of the same day, prescribed to the Jewish people in particular," was also ceremonial, as the synod of Dordt speaks. God required that "who ever did any work on the sabbathday, should be put to death," Exod. xxxi. 15. xxxv. 2. Numb. xv. 32—36. But we may reasonably doubt whether Israel was obliged to keep this sabbath so strictly as some have imagined, as if "they might neither bake, nor seethe aught on the sabbath, that no man might go out of his tent, nor kindle fire in his habitation on that day," according to Exod. xvi. 23, 29. xxxv. 3, for when the Lawgiver saith, xvi. 23, "Bake that which ye bake, and seethe that which ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you, to be kept until the morning," he doth not then order that they should bake and seethe all that they had before the sabbath, and that they should lay up until the morning that which should be left of what they had baken and sodden: for this law seems to distinguish between that which was baken and sodden, and that which was left, and thus neither baken nor sodden, which might then be prepared on the sabbath; if it should nevertheless be thought, that this passage forbids baking and seething on the sabbath, we must conceive that it had respect only to preparing the manna, which was attended with considerable labour. See Numb. xi. 8. But it was not an universal law: for if "they might prepare as much food on the paschal sabbath, as every man should eat," Exod. xii. 16, and if Solomon and Nehemiah needed so much food every day for their households, as is mentioned 1 Kings iv. 22, 23. Neh. v. 17, 18, we may then believe that they might prepare at least their necessary food on the weekly sabbath. The words, "that the people should not go out of their place," Exod. xvi. 19, respected the gathering of Manna, which was their daily employment: but it was no command, that they should always abide in their houses on the sabbath; for that would have hindered the worship of God. Might not the Israelites "kindle fire" on the sabbath, Exod. xxxv. 3, that cannot be understood without any limitation, because kindling fire was necessary for children and weakly persons, and in the winter: but we must understand these words of the fire, which they used for ther daily callings, or for building the tabernacle; for so this law, Exod. xxxv. 3, is connected with Exod.

xxxi where they are commanded to rest even from the work of the tabernacle. And we must believe when the Jews censured the Saviour and his disciples so often, on account of the liberty which they used, according to the law of God, on the sabbath, that it proceeded from a misunderstanding of these commandments.

These things many divines consider as ceremonial, to which the Jews only were obliged, and which are abolished under the New Testament. They look upon these things, either as typically ceremonial, or as circumstances, which tended to a proper regulation of the Jewish worship.

The question therefore is, whether the sabbath of the fourth commandment is typically ceremonial, and consequently abolished, under the New Testament; and whether Christians therefore are not obligated to observe the day of rest by virtue of the fourth commandment; or whether Christians are obligated by virtue of the fourth commandment to celebrate and observe one day after six workingdays, as a day set apart for publick worship, and to abstain for this purpose from their daily labours. We deny the first of these opinions, and maintain the second, and will confirm it with proper arguments.

But before we exhibit our arguments, we will show that this opinion of ours is also the doctrine of the church of the Netherlands. This appears from the forms of union, to which all the ministers of the church of the Netherlands oblige themselves by their subscriptions. The synod of Dordtrecht saith, "that the morality of the fourth commandment consists herein, that a certain and fixed day is ordained for the worship of God, and so much rest, as is necessary for divine worship, and a holy meditation on it. The Jewish sabbath being abolished, the day of the Lord must be solemnly sanctified. This day hath always been observed from the times of the apostles in the ancient catholic church. The same day must be so dedicated to the worship of God, that we rest from all our works, except such actions as pertain to charity and present necessity, and that we also abstain from such pleasures and amusements, as hinder divine worship." And our catechism saith, "God requires in the fourth commandment, that the ministry of the gospel, or the office of preaching, and the schools be maintained; and that I, especially on the sabbath, that is, on the day of rest, diligently frequent the church of God, to hear his word," &c. Are not these moral duties, which ought to be observed by Christians under the New Testament, as well as they behooved to be observed by the Jews under the Old Testament? It is true, the instructor saith, that according to the fourth command-

ment, "the schools ought to be maintained;" it is also true, that we do not go to school on the day of rest; nevertheless the instructor would not teach thereby, that the sabbath was in this respect ceremonial and typical; for they did not go to school under the Old Testament neither on the sabbath; but he means that this was necessary, in order that the sabbath might be celebrated by preaching on it. Neither doth the catechism intimate that it considers the fourth commandment as typically ceremonial, when it saith that it requireth also "that we rest all the days of our lives from our evil works, and yield ourselves to the Lord, to work in us by his holy Spirit, and thus begin in this life the eternal sabbath;" but it saith this, in order to explain the commandment in its greatest extent, as it explains the other commandments; for this spiritual keeping of the sabbath belongs to, and follows from the celebration of the sabbath. See what we say of these things in the sequel. All this, saith the instructor, of which we have declared, that we would abide by it, is enjoined in the fourth commandment, and so he intends that it was enjoined on the Jews also. If now the fourth commandment be wholly ceremonial, it doth not then concern us. Or shall we say the fourth commandment typified this to us, and so it concerns us: but is the fourth commandment therefore moral? If it be affirmed, then all the ceremonial commands are moral. If it be denied; what morality will there then be in the fourth command? And we must surely say, as we are obliged, that the fourth commandment is with respect to the essence of it, moral, and so our opinion is taught in the forms of union.

If this were only the doctrine of our church, we should not have a sufficient warrant to embrace it, but the word of God obligeth us to consider it, as a certain truth. For that teacheth us,

1. That the sabbath was instituted by God, even before the fall after his own example. This Moses teaches us, Gen. ii. 23, "On the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his works which he had made: And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his works." That with these words God instituted the sabbath after his example, and that this passage relates not to that seventhday only, but to all the following days also, and that this is not an anticipated account, we have just now seen in our explanation of the fourth commandment. Paul teaches us this also, Hebr. 3—9. It was his design to prove that the words of Psalm xcv. 11, "I sware that they should not enter into my rest," ought to be understood of the blessed rest after this life, for which we must

still look, as appears from his conclusion, vs. 9, "There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God." But how doth he prove this? He shows that Psalm xcv. 11, cannot speak either of the rest of Canaan, or of the rest of the seventh day because that was not a rest to come for Israel, into which they should enter, but that it was known even from the foundation of the world, vrs. 3, 4, even then men of that time entered into the rest; therefore the sabbath was instituted before the fall from the foundation of the world. Whence it evidently followeth, that the sabbath cannot be ceremonia, typifying Christ and his benefits of the New Testament; since Christ could not be considered as Mediator, and therefore no typifying ceremonies could come into consideration before the fall. They object indeed against the institution of the sabbath before the fall, (a) that Adam fell before the seventh day; but what proof have they for that? There is certainly not the least sign nor shadow of it. We have demonstrated the contrary, though briefly, in treating on the seventh question. They say further, (b) that the sabbath did not become Adam, because he was not weary; but they suppose then that bodily rest only was enjoined in the fourth commandment: but this we deny, and have shown that the seventh day was enjoined, that men abstaining from their daily labour, (which Adam was also obliged to do by keeping and dressing the garden) they might serve God in a solemn manner. How could God command bodily idleness, which is the fruitful source of every kind of iniquity? who can think this? the rest of sleep became Adam; why not then also the rest of the seventh day? (c) They say, we read not that the sabbath was kept before the manna was given, and the fathers were never reproved for not keeping it: But was the sabbath therefore not instituted? can we infer this from a negative argument? The fathers were not reproved for having more than one wife at the same time; was it therefore not contrary to the first institution of marriage? Very little is recorded concerning those times, and therefore we do not know all that happened then. The fathers of those times knew something of the period of seven days, which began with the first, and ended with the seventh day, and so with the sabbath which was then known, Gen. viii. 10, 11. xxix. 27, 28. The godly of those times celebrated public worship: for when "Enos was born, men began to call upon the name of the Lord," Gen. iv 26. Did they do that without a stated time for it? If I be not prepossessed with prejudices, this will induce me to think that they observed for that purpose the day which God had instituted.

2. The morality of the sabbath appears also from the fourth com-

mandment itself; for this commandment is contained in the moral law, as well as the other nine commandments, it was given to Israel by God amidst a display of his exalted Majesty by thunder and lightening, before the ceremonial law, it was engraven upon the tables of stone, which were laid up in the ark of the covenant, and enforced, not with ceremonial and typical, but only with the moral reasons of God's blessing, sanctifying, and example. What ritual and ceremonial commandment was ever accompanied with all this? There is therefore no reason why we should esteem the fourth commandment to be ceremonial and abolished, and not moral and everlasting.

3. When we hold that the fourth commandment is ceremonial and abolished, we annul, contrary to the command and threatening of Christ, Matt. v. 17, 18, 19, not merely "one of the least," but one of "the greatest commandments of the law." It appears plainly from the connexion, that he enforceth here serious godliness, according to the moral law; how can we then presume to say, that one of these commandments is ceremonial and abolished? We cannot excuse ourselves by saying that we do not annul the commandment concerning the sabbath, when we declare it to be ceremonial and abolished, because we do still fulfil it by keeping the sabbath spiritually and daily: for the antitype of the ceremonies being come the law of ceremonies is abolished and annulled, and so we teach that one of the commandments of the moral law is annulled, when we declare it to be ceremonial; but this is contrary to the text.

4. Add to this the natural equity of the fourth commandment, which will always declare it to be holy and good. Is it not equitable, that man and beast, when wearied with slavish labour, "should be refreshed?" See Exod. xxiii. 12. Can any person deem it to be improper, that all the saints on the whole earth should, as one body, abstain from labour on a certain day and time, and endeavour to exercise in a solemn manner the communion of saints, and to employ themselves in knowing, loving, fearing, praising and delighting themselves in God? and this belongs to keeping the sabbath: see Isaiah lxiii. 13, 14. We wonder therefore how men can decry the sabbath, as a superstitious imposition.

We might combat the opinion of our opponents also from its injustice, and because we cannot find any where in the word of God, that the works of the believing Israelites were unclean, and that this was declared to them by the sabbath. We are willing to allow that the purification was not yet accomplished by the actual sacrifice of Christ, but that it should be accomplished; that Christ should rest

in the grave, and the believers under the New Testament from the ceremonial service: but that these things were signified to Israel in the fourth commandment, of this we have neither word nor tittle. But I will not busy myself with these matters, but only vindicate the divine commandment, and refute the objections of the adversaries.

The principal objections against the morality of the sabbath of the fourth commandment are the following:

1. That if the fourth commandment do still oblige us, we ought then to observe the last, and not the first day of the week. But we have just now shown, that the seventh day in particular belongs not to the essence of the fourth commandment. We add now also, that if we cannot find here any divine translation of the last to the first day of the week, we are then still bound to that last day. But it is evident, that the first day was instituted instead of the seventh; for why is the first day called "the Lord's day?" Rev. i. 10. Is it not, because the Lord Jesus, the Lord of the sabbath rested on that day from his painful labour, and instituted it for his service, as the seventhday sabbath is therefore called the Lord's sabbath? what else moved the apostles to meet together just on the first day of the week? John xx. 19, 26. Why did the disciples at Troas assemble just on that day to break bread, Acts xx. 7, if that day were not instituted before? why doth Paul recommend to the Galatians and Corinthians to make their charitable collections on the first, and not on any other day of the week? 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. No other reason can be assigned for this, but the divine institution of that day. Did not the Lord of the sabbath also bless the first day, when he showed himself present sundry times with his apostles on that day? John xx. 19, &c. poured out his Spirit, Acts ii. 1—4, and caused the disciple, whom he loved, to be in the spirit on that day? Rev. i. 1. How hath it come to pass, that the Christians throughout the whole world, from the times of the apostles, even until now have agreed to celebrate public worship on this day? did any synod, or Christian emperour, or king introduce that custom, where it was not before? surely no. It is true, we read not that Christ said, Keep the first day of the week instead of the seventh; but all the words of our Saviour have not been recorded: because he saith no where, baptize infants, shall we therefore say, that he did not institute infant baptism? no, but we conclude that from good reasons and consequences, and so we conclude also from what hath been said, that the first day of the week was instituted, either immediately by the Lord himself or by his apostles.

2. They allege also against the morality of the fourth commandment, Exod. xxxi. 13. "Verily, my sabbaths ye shall keep, for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." They conclude from this that the seventhday sabbath was a covenant sign only for the nation of Israel of the future sanctification by Christ: but this doth not follow from that passage. For (a) we do not read in that verse of the seventhday sabbath, but in vs. 16, 17, and so an evident distinction is made between sabbaths in the plural, and sabbath in the singular; and it is not said of this sabbath, that it is a sign of sanctification, but of the creation: "It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed," vs. 17. (b) If it were even so, that the seventhday sabbath was a sign that the Lord would sanctify Israel, it would not follow therefrom, that it was a sign of the future sanctification; for God signified to Israel by the sabbath, that he sanctified them even then; for Israel by keeping the sabbath was separated from other people, and exercised the holy worship of God, by which they were sanctified. See Psalm cxlvii. 19, 20. (c) If we should allow that the seventhday sabbath was a sacramental sign of the covenant, concerning the future sanctification through Christ, to the generations of Israel only, it would not follow then neither, that the sabbath was from its first institution, of itself a typifying ceremony, that might be abolished; but that it was annexed to the fourth commandment by the Sovereign Lawgiver, as an appendage for the Israel of that time, as the Lord appointed the rainbow, which was naturally and of itself no sign, to be afterwards a sign of the covenant, Gen. xi. 13.

3. It is said further, that the sabbath is distinguished, Ezek. xxii. 12, from "the statutes and judgments, by which we live;" for the Lord saith, "Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths." But (a) it is not true, that the statutes and judgments signify only the moral law, by which we live; for the ceremonial and civil law is also so called, Mal. iv. 4. Eph. ii. 15. (b) The sabbath is enjoined in the moral law, by which we live. (c) The sabbath is distinguished "from "the statutes, which were not good, and the judgments, by which the Israelites should not live," Ezek. xx. 24, 25, by which some erroneously affirm the ceremonial laws to be understood: and God saith that he gave them those evil statutes and destructive judgments on account of their violation of the sabbath. (d) The word "moreover," or according to the original, "and also," doth

not imply any opposition of the sabbath to the statutes and judgments, but it connects the sabbath with the statutes and judgments, as of the same nature. We see this word used thus, Gen. i. 18. Exod. x. 25, 26. (e) Further, we do not read here of sabbath in the singular, as the seventhday sabbath is commonly mentioned in the singular; but of sabbaths in the plural, and therefore the ceremonial sabbaths must be understood here.

4. They likewise object against us, Rom. xv. 5. Gal. iv. 10 11. Col. ii. 16, 17, where Paul considers those as "weak, who esteemed one day above another:" he saith also that "the observation of days, months, times, and years is hurtful and pernicious at present; and that those things were a shadow of Christ:" but if the sabbath be on this account ceremonial, we may not then observe any days at all under any pretence whatever, more than any other part of the ceremonial law, and we must therefore condemn not only all Christians of the present time, who observe the first day of the week, as a day of publick worship, but the apostles and primitive Christians also, whose example we now follow. But besides this, we may understand by those who esteemed one day above another, the stronger Christians of the Gentiles, who observed the Lord's day above other days to the Lord; for as he who believeth that he may eat all things is mentioned before him, who is weak, vrs. 2, 3, so also he who esteemeth one day above another is mentioned in the same order, before him, who esteems every day alike. But not to insist upon this, let it be proved that Paul hath respect in the passages alleged to the seventh day sabbath; he speaks indeed, Col. ii. 16, of sabbaths: he mentions also Gal. iv. 10, days; but there were more sabbaths of days, than the seventhday sabbath, as we have just now shown. And although the apostle did intend the seventhday sabbath, his words cannot however extend further than the Jewish sabbath of the seventh day, after the creation, with all its circumstances and appendages, agreeably to the nature of the ancient œconomy.

5. They think that Christ declares the sabbath to be ceremonial, when he saith, Matt. xii. 5, (a) that the priests profaned the sabbath by their ceremonial works on it; as though he taught that the essence of the fourth commandment required only a cessation from labour. But who sees not that the Saviour refutes the Jews from their own principles? for they imagined that every kind of labour, even "plucking and eating ears of corn" on the sabbath was forbidden, Christ teaches, in opposition thereto, that this was not forbidden, because otherwise the priests also would have profaned the sabbath by their religious employment on it. Inasmuch as the Jews

would not allow this, therefore his disciples also did not profane the sabbath by plucking and eating ears of corn on it. Neither doth it follow, that the fourth commandment forbids only doing any kind of work, because that is a profanation of the sabbath; for we have shown before, that the fourth commandment enjoins not only rest, but also publick worship on the sabbath. (b) Christ also calls the keeping of the sabbath a sacrifice, Matt. xii. 7, and sacrifices behooved to give place to mercy; from which they will conclude that the sabbath is ceremonial, as well as the sacrifices: but it is evident that he doth not call the keeping of the sabbath a sacrifice, but the superstition of the Jews, who made the commandment of God of none effect by their traditions; since they were not willing, that any necessary work should be done on the sabbath, as plucking ears of corn to appease hunger, healing the sick and infirm. See Luke xiii. 10—17. xiv. 1—6. John v. 5—17.

6. The sabbath, it is said, was a type of the rest of the New Testament, in which the church rests from the burthensome service of the Old Testament; for Paul calls the rest which remains for the people of God, *sabbatismos*, and he adds, "he that is entered into his rest hath also ceased from his own works, as God did from his," Heb. iv. 9, 10, by which the apostle therefore showeth that this spiritual rest was typified by the sabbath. Since now the antitype, the spiritual rest of the New Testament, is come, therefore the type, even the sabbath, ought to be abolished. Some will deny that Paul represents the sabbath in that passage as a type, although they admit that he alludes to it. Let us not however be so unyielding, but rather admit freely and readily, that the sabbath was a type of the rest, that remaineth for the people of God; but even then it will not follow that the sabbath is now abolished. For (1) the rest, *sabbatismos*, is not the rest of the New Testament, but of eternal salvation, which the people of God will enjoy after this life in heaven. This is evident, because, (a) the apostle speaks of the rest which is not enjoyed at present, but which remaineth. But the believing Hebrews enjoyed even then the rest of the New Testament, to which they had already attained through the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, and through the spirit of the feast of Pentecost, and it did not therefore remain for them. (b) He speaks of that rest, into which Israel could enter under the Old Testament by faith, and into which they did not enter because of their unbelief. See Heb. iii. 18, 19. iv. 2, 6. Now the Israel of the Old Testament could not surely enter into the rest of the New Testament by faith, inasmuch as the New Testament was not yet come nor offered to them, as it was by

the preaching of the Baptist and of Jesus, Matt. iii. 2. iv. 17. From which it therefore followeth, that Paul doth not teach, Heb. iv. 9, 10. that the rest of the New Testament was typified by the sabbath, but only the blessed rest of heaven. (2) He speaks of the sabbath before the fall, upon which God rested from his works, and which he gave to man that he might rest as God had done, Heb. iv. 10. Gen. ii. 2. 3. Now that sabbath could not typify any matter of the New Testament, since before the fall there could not be any respect to sin, and therefore none to any Mediator of the New Testament. And so it follows indeed, that that sabbath was a type of the everlasting rest, and that when this rest is come, the celebrating of the sabbath will cease: but not that the sabbath shadowed forth the rest of the New Testament and is therefore abolished.

Perhaps it may be thought, hearers, that I insist too long upon the dispute concerning the sabbath; but the great pains which men have taken to invalidate the Christian sabbath, obligeth us to this. I will however desist, having spoken sufficiently on this subject, and will teach you the duties of the sabbath according to the instructer. He informs us that three great duties belong to the keeping of the sabbath; first that which is required before the sabbath; then the public duties, which we ought to perform on the sabbath; and lastly the end of keeping the sabbath.

That which is required beforehand, in order that we may keep the sabbath, is "that the ministry of the gospel and the schools be maintained." Inasmuch as the Lord's day is set apart for the public worship of God, it is therefore necessary, that the service of the church or the ministry of the gospel, should be exercised, and therefore also maintained: but whereas it hath not pleased God to bestow the extraordinary gifts of his spirit always, as he did formerly upon his apostles, it is therefore necessary, that schools, either of a lower or higher order, should be maintained for exercising youth, in order to prepare them for the ministry of the gospel, and for other special functions of the civil community that they may cherish the service of the church. Even in the times of the prophets there were schools in which the sons of the prophets were taught and exercised.

The duties which we must perform on the sabbath-day in public, are in general, "diligently to frequent the church of God." If any person have so much leisure, that he can afford time on other days to come to the [illegible] of God's people, let him do that also

for the good of his soul;* but he must do it particularly on the sabbath, as God hath commanded, Lev. xxiii. 3. We read frequently in the Acts of the Apostles, that the people of God had this custom: "Paul also preached on the first day of the week to the disciples, who were come together at Troas," Acts xx. 6, 7. But what must we do in the church? shall we go thither only to see and to be seen? no, but we must go, (a) "to hear the word of God," as "at Antioch, almost the whole city came together on the sabbath to hear the word of God," Acts xiii. 44. We ought to have ears there to hear what the Spirit saith to the church: "the ears of all the people" ought to be "attentive to the word," Neh. viii. 4. (b) We must also go to the church of God on the day of the Lord, "to use the sacraments," as the believers "at Troas came together on the first day of the week to break bread," Acts xx. 7. We ought certainly not to receive the sacraments privately in a corner, as the Papists do, but in the congregation of God's people. (c) We must also then and there "publicly call on the Lord God." We must call upon him also in private, but in order to serve God publicly, we must call upon him also publicly in the congregation on the sabbath: thus Paul and the Christians "went on the sabbathday out of the city to the river, where prayer was wont to be made," Acts xvi. 13. (d) We must also go to the church on the sabbath, "that we may contribute to the relief of the poor, as becometh Christians;" this the apostle recommended to the Galatians and Corinthians, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.

But will it suffice and satisfy the demand of the fourth commandment, to set apart one day in this manner, and to do no more than that? no, God surely ordained the sabbath, that he might sanctify his people: the sabbath must also serve to the end, "that we may cease" and rest "all the days of our lives from our evil works:" the exercises of the sabbath ought surely to invite and urge us to this, and we must for this end "seek for the Lord to work in us by his Spirit," not only on that day, but on every day, by means of the word, the sacraments and the prayers of the sabbath, and we ought to retain a relish of those exercises, and thus inhale and solicit the

* The author appears to refer here to a custom of the cities in Holland, of having divine service in the churches every day of the week, except Mondays and Saturdays, and on those days also when they are festivals. This is feasible there, as they have in those cities usually several more ministers than churches. Thus in Amsterdam the Reformed have eleven churches and thirty ministers, in Rotterdam they have four churches and twelve ministers.

operations of the Spirit of the Lord, by a continual uplooking to him, and depending on him, like the spouse, Song iv. 16. And so "we will begin in this life the everlasting sabbath and rest, which remaineth for the people of God," according to Heb. iv. 9.

APPLICATION.

What think ye, beloved, can such a keeping of the sabbath be deemed a yoke and a burthen, which doth not become the free people of the New Testament? those who relish the power, the advantages and the delights of the sabbath will not judge so concerning it.

But how shamefully is this day, which God hath hallowed and blessed, unhallowed by many! for there are few who remember it to keep it holy. Will not one and another defer a part of his daily labour until this day, that he may do it on the Lord's day? on this day men will indulge in sleep more than on other days, they will work, trade, travel, divert themselves, and seek their pleasure, yea, practise every kind of vanity and abomination. If they come to the church of God, they think that they have done well, when they have been there once: do they attend oftner, it is a burthen, they cry and sigh with sinful Israel, Amos viii. 5. "When will the sabbath be past?" They are satisfied with doing the outward duties of the sabbath, without spirit and life; or if they do aught themselves, they take no heed to their children nor servants, as if the sabbath were not ordained for them also.

How do ye dare act thus? This is surely a commandment of God, delivered amidst thunder and lightning, and it hath the Lord for its example, more than any other command of the law. Do ye not know, that God is angry with those who profane the sabbath? the land of Canaan was laid waste, and Israel carried away captive to Babylon, on account of this sin, Levit xxvi. 34. Neh. xiii. 17. God would, on account of it, "kindle a fire in the gates of Jerusalem, which could not be quenched," Jer. xvii. 27. and "he would pour out his fury upon his people in the wilderness, to consume them," Ezek. xx. 13. Ye need not excuse yourselves by thinking, that there are many learned men, who say that we are not obliged to keep the sabbath under the New Testament; for they are not the word of God, from which we and others have proved, that the fourth commandment, as well as the other commandments of the

law, are an everlasting rule to us. And why will ye adopt the sentiments of one learned man, rather than those of another? is it not because ye can reconcile them better to the lusts of your carnal ease, pleasure and profit? or is it because ye think that they agree better with the word of God? If so, I would advise you to consider whether all our Netherland divines do not, with the Synod of Dordt, say, "that the fourth commandment is moral, so far as it appropriates a certain and stated day to religious worship, and so much rest also, as is necessary for religious worship, and holy meditation on it," &c. Is there indeed a single learned man, who doth not say, that the first day of the week ought to be observed, if not on account of the fourth commandment, nevertheless either on account of maintaining good order, or for the sake of an ecclesiastical or civil institution? Ye have therefore no reason for profaning the day of the Lord in such a wanton manner. But ye surely sin more grievously, and against your own conscience, who say and maintain your own selves, that the fourth commandment is moral, and do still violate the sabbath.

Therefore humble yourselves on account of this sin, seek reconciliation for it in the blood of the Lord of the sabbath, and bring your hearts to him, that he may, as he hath promised, write also this commandment in them, and that ye may once set about keeping the sabbath in good earnest. It is surely reasonable, easy and pleasant: God promiseth to do great things for them, who keep the sabbath, "he will give them in his house, and within his walls, a place and a name better than that of sons and of daughters; he will make them joyful in his house of prayer, and will accept of all their religious performances," Isaiah lvi. 4—7. Yea, "ye shall then delight yourselves in the Lord, and he will cause you to ride on the high places of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father." Friends, how can ye be so averse from keeping the sabbath! ye surely wish for a place in heaven: well, there we will have an everlasting sabbath as Paul speaks, Hebr. iv. 9.

Do ye desire to keep the sabbath in such a manner, that ye will derive a blessing from it, prepare yourselves then for it beforehand, endeavour to conduct properly on it and to make a right improvement of it, after it is ended.

1. Ye must, in the first place, prepare yourselves for it beforehand. The Lord God saith therefore to you, "Remember the sabbathday to keep it holy." If we have not thought of it beforehand, and if we begin the work of the sabbath with a heart wholly disordered, and distracted with earthly concerns, our souls will not be in

a proper frame for celebrating this day of the Lord. And therefore (a) seek to impress on your minds a sense of the divine institution of this day, that ye may observe it in obedience to God. The holy women "rested on the sabbath, according to the commandment," Luke xxiii. 56. "He who regardeth the day must regard it to the Lord," Rom. xiv. 6. We shall not otherwise regard it in faith, and then we sin, Rom. xiv. 23. (b) Long for the day of the Lord, because God hath blessed and hallowed it. On this day he gives his blessed and holy institutions, with which he blesseth and makes us holy, he gives also his Spirit, delights and rejoices his people in his house of prayer, he accepts our burntofferings and sacrifices on his altar, and we delight ourselves in the Lord. Hear how desirous David was of the public institutions of the Lord, and imitate his example, Psalm xxvii. 4. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple" See also how he panted and longed for this, Psalm xlii. lxiii. lxxxiv. and cxxii. (c) Finish all your work seasonably before the sabbath, that ye may betake yourselves early to your nightly rest, and may thus celebrate the day of the Lord with a mind freed from all earthly cares, and refreshed with moderate sleep. When Abraham will go up into the mountain in order to "worship, his young men and the ass must abide below," Gen. xxii. 5. (d) "Betake not yourselves to your nightly rest, until ye have first thought with sorrow and humiliation on your backslidings from the Lord, during the former days of the week, have confessed them to the Lord, and obtained reconciliation and peace with him, by heartily embracing his Son, that ye may with David, "lay yourselves down in peace and sleep, and the Lord may make you dwell safely," Psalm iv. 3. This would bring your souls to a most proper frame for keeping the day of the Lord, in a manner acceptable to him.

2. In order that we may conduct ourselves properly on this day, we must not only abstain altogether from our daily work, as we have shown before, and not only come diligently to the church of God, that we may attend on the public worship; but we must also endeavour (a) to obtain the influences of the Spirit of the Lord, that we may be thereby enlightened, enlivened, sanctified, and rendered active. We ought therefore to pray to the Lord with David, Psalm xliii. 3. "O send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill and to thy tabernacles." (b) We ought also to exercise ourselves before and after public worship,

one while in secret, and then with our households, in contemplating God's great works of creation and redemption, in praying over them, in speaking and singing of them. Hear how the holy man expresseth himself in his psalm for the sabbathday, when he saith, "Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands. O Lord how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep," &c. Psalm xcii. 4, 5. This would render "the sabbath a delight to us, and the Lord, who is to be honored would be sanctified,"* Isaiah lviii. 13. Yea, we should, after the example of God, "rest and be refreshed," Exod. xxxi. 18, and with John, Rev. i. 10, "be in the Spirit on the Lord's day."

3. But it behooves us, in order to show that we are not satisfied with the mere work, to make a suitable improvement of the sabbath after it is ended. And it would therefore be proper, to recollect wherein we had misbehaved, that we might humble ourselves; what blessing God had bestowed on us, that we might reflect on it, with the clean animals feed anew on it, and hear twice, what God speaks once," Psalm lxii. 11. We should then retain the blessing of the sabbathday, and a relish for it, and we should derive nourishment from it the whole week, yea, our lives long, we should rest from our wicked works, suffer the Lord to work in us by his Spirit, and thus begin here on earth the everlasting sabbath.

Before I conclude, I must add, (a) that every one ought to keep the sabbath; the magistrates also, not only for themselves, but also for their subjects, "who are in their gates," that they may cause them to rest. O! that they were inflamed with such a spirit of zeal, as Nehemiah, Neh. xiii. 15—22. Parents ought also to keep the sabbath, and to see that their children and servants keep it, as the Lawgiver enjoineth in this fourth commandment. (b) Let none think that the sabbath requires a more holy worship than the other days: all our daily works, yea, our "eating and drinking" ought to be directed "to the glory of God," 1 Cor. x 31. But the sabbath requires a worship of a different kind, we must then worship in a solemn manner, and in public. Neither must we imagine, that resting is in itself pleasing to God, for it is not agreable to him, unless we direct it to the worship of the Lord:" Bodily exercise profiteth indeed but little: but godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," 1 Tim. iv. 8. (c) Do not busy yourselves neither with many trifling questions, which minister disputation, as, may I not do this or that on

* We have rendered this passage according to the Dutch translation.

the Lord's day? for this will render your tender minds too scrupulous, or too lax. "From this doting about questions and strifes of words cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings," as Paul speaks, I Tim. vi. 4, 5. According to the counsel of Eliphas, Job xxii. 21, 22. "Acquaint now yourselves with the Lord, receive the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in your hearts." desiring only to inquire concerning and to do the will of God: "The Lord will then give you counsel, your reins will instruct you in the night seasons." as David experienced, Psalm xvi. 7. This will afford you an abundant sabbath, or rest of mind, and the Lord God will grant you an everlasting and a most blissful sabbath; for, as the apostle saith, Hebr. iv. 9, "There remaineth a rest for the people of God." Amen.

THE

FIFTH COMMANDMENT

EXPLAINED.

XXXIX. LORD'S DAY.

Exodus xx. 12. Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Q. 104. *What doth God require in the fifth command?*

A. That I show all honour, love and fidelity to my father and mother, and all in authority over me, and submit myself to their good instruction and correction, with due obedience: and also patiently bear with their weaknessess and infirmities, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand.

"LOVE is the fulfilling of the law," thus speaks Paul, Rom. xiii. 10. He speaks of the love of our neighbour; for he had said, vs 8. "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." But how can he say this? must we not love God also, and more than our neighbour? Surely the command to love God is, as Jesus declares, "the first and great commandment," Matt. xxii. 37. But it is not so strange, that the love of our neighbour is the fulfilling of the law; for when this love is

properly exercised, it proceeds from a heart that is filled with love to God, and it is active for the sake and the love of God, and so the love of our neighbour is the evidence and proof of our love to God. Therefore the apostle, whom Jesus loved, saith, 1 John iv. 20, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" He then who loves God, cannot say that he fulfills the law, unless he love his brother also; for as the same beloved of the Lord saith, 1 John iv. 20. "This commandment have we received of him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also."

Therefore as we have exhorted every one to love God in our discourses on the commands of the first table, so we will also show how we must fulfil the law by loving our neighbour, according to the commands of the second table of the law. In which the duty of children to love their parents is commanded in the first place, because we are obliged to them most of all next to God: and because we must understand by our parents likewise all who are set over us, as will appear, and so this command secures the four following commands from transgression; for when the higher powers are honoured, then murderers, adulterers, thieves and liars will also be restrained.

Two particulars require our consideration here:

I. The demand of this commandment, and then

II. The promise annexed to enforce the observation of the commandment.

I. It hath not pleased God, according to his exalted wisdom, to create all men at once, but of one blood, and thus to cause one to proceed from another, that one might cleave to another, as his fellowman, in love, and that children might be subject to their parents, and a good order be established in human society, and God's supreme authority over his creatures be represented. Therefore the great Lawgiver saith, "Honour thy father and thy mother."

God chooseth that we should honour our mother as well as our father. As the mother is subject to the dominion of the father, converses most familiarly with the children, and manifests her love to the children generally more than the father, she will also usually be less reverenced by the children than the father. The Lord will nevertheless not suffer this, but commands us to love our mother as well as our father. The children are indeed the flesh and blood of the mother as well as of the father. We must surely honour our mother no less than our father, for she carries her children in her

bowels, brings them forth with pain, and cherishes them with more tenderness and difficulty, than the father. Therefore the mother is once indeed exhibited to the children as the object of this duty, before the father: "Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father," saith the Lord, Lev xix. 3.

"God's commandment is exceedingly broad," saith the man after God's heart, Psalm cxix. 96. It calls all those who are set over us our fathers and mothers. For the magistrates are fathers in the civil state: "Eliakim, having the government in his hands should be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah," Isaiah xxii. 20, 21. Thus also the aged, "whom we must entreat as fathers and mothers," 1 Tim. v. 1, 2. In the church ministers are fathers, especially they who are the instruments of a person's spiritual birth: so Paul was "a father" of the Corinthians, "having begotten them through the gospel," 1 Cor. iv. 15. And in a family relation ancestors are fathers and mothers; therefore the patriarchs are called the fathers of Israel. Stephen saith, Acts vii. 11. "Our fathers found no sustenance." Stepfathers and stepmothers are not excepted here. Joseph the husband of Mary, is called the father of Jesus, Luke ii. 48. It is thus also with fathersinlaw and mothersinlaw, as David called Saul his father. 1 Sam. xxiv. 12, and Naomi called Ruth her daughter, Ruth iii 1. Thus likewise guardians, who take upon themselves the care of another person's children, and treat them as their own, are fathers; so "Mordecai took Esther for his daughter," Esther ii. 7, 15. Masters and mistresses must also be considered as fathers and mothers of their servants; the servants of Naaman, the Syrian called him their father, 2 Kings v. 13.

The Lord God is alone wise, and therefore doth nothing in vain, as it is also not without a reason, that he bestows the names of father and mother on all those who are set over us; for he teacheth us thus (a) the intimate relation and connexion of superiors and inferiors, that it is like that, which subsists between parents and children, (b) God also shows thereby, that they who are set over others ought to govern their inferiors with love and affection, as fathers and mothers, and that the inferiors ought to obey as children. (c) All the authority that one man hath over another hath originated from the power of fathers. Before many families connected themselves together in an orderly neighbourhood, the fathers were the magistrates, teachers and priests of their families; but after those families had connected themselves together, the fathers elected a head, even the magistrate.

as a common father, that he might govern and protect the multitude according to certain laws.

Inasmuch as fatherhood and motherhood imply a superiority and supremacy over the children, therefore the Lord requires that this should be acknowledged; and hence he saith, with a dreadful display of his supreme authority to every child, "honour thy father and mother." We do this, when we acknowledge the superiority and honourableness of our parents with reverence, with inward dispositions of mind, which we express by becoming gestures, words, actions and virtues; as Solomon honoured his mother, when "he rose up from his throne to meet her, bowed himself to her, and set her on his right hand," 1 Kings ii. 19. We must also "honour the king." 1 Peter ii. 17 So Job was honoured like a prince by his people; when "he went out to the gate through the city, when he prepared his seat in the street, the young men saw him, and hid themselves, and the aged arose and stood up," &c. Job xxix 7. 8. We may not despise aged persons, but we must "rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man." Lev. xix. 32. We must also honour our preachers; for "the elders who rule well must be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine," 1 Tim. v. 17. and Paul commands servants "to count their masters worthy of all honour," 1 Tim. vi. 1.

He who honours his parents, (1) will also love them; love is indeed the mother of that fair daughter honour. It is also the law of love, that enjoins honour; as love also actually honours parents by showing a good inclination to them, by doing well to them, and fulfilling their desires. It is so natural and innate to children to love their parents, that it was not necessary to enjoin it upon them directly; neither do I know that this virtue is any where enjoined in the book of God, except indirectly; "He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me," saith the Saviour, Matt. x. 37, and he therefore supposeth that every child naturally loves his parents They are unnatural, degenerate children, "without natural affection," 2 Tim. iii. 8, who are destitute of this virtue. We ought to love not only our natural parents, but the magistrates also, as fathers: we may "not curse them," as Solomon saith, Eccl. x. 20. The people who cleaved to their king, David, loved him so, that they would not suffer him to expose himself in the battle against Absalom, that he might not be endangered. Preachers, who like good fathers, feed and nourish the churches with the word of God, "must be esteemed very highly in love for their work's sake," according to 1 Thess. v. 13. The Galatians quitted themselves well in this re-

spect toward Paul: "they would if it had been possible, have plucked out their eyes, and given them to him." Gal. iv. 14, 15. The Lord teacheth us that we must love also the aged, our forefathers and fathersinlaw, when he orders it to be recorded, as a detestable action, that "the daughterinlaw rose up against her motherinlaw," Micha vii. 6. It is also the duty of servants to love their masters and mistresses, and to serve them from love; for "we cannot serve a master, whom we hate, and do not love," as Jesus speaks, Matt. vi. 24.

2. As love is the mother of honour, so honour hath also a sister, even fidelity, who serves her parents, without bereaving them of aught that is theirs; for "whoso robbeth his father and mother, and saith, it is no transgression, the same is the companion of a destroyer," Prov. xxviii. 24. Like Joseph, the faithful child, when it is in his power, "will sustain his father, his brethren, and all his father's household with bread, even to the little ones," Gen xlvii. 12. We must be faithful also to the magistrates; "To Cæsar we must give the things that are Cæsar's," Matt. xxii. 21. "Render tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom," saith that faithful apostle, Rom. xiii. 7. It is a detestable conduct to deny our preachers a proper support: even Pharaoh provided for his priests, Gen. xlvii. 22, 47. Paul also requires that people should support their preachers, 1 Cor. ix. 4—10. Gal. vi. 6. And though our forefathers are not so nearly related to us as our immediate parents, we must nevertheless "requite them," according to 1 Tim. v. 4. It is also the duty of servants to serve their masters and mistresses faithfully, and not "to purloin from them," Titus ii. 10. "Good servants," are called also "faithful servants" by the Saviour, Matt. xxv. 21, 22.

3. But if there be aught that becomes children, it is particularly "that they submit themselves to the good instruction and correction of their parents with due obedience." They must receive their instructions with teachableness: "My son," saith Solomon, Prov. i. 8, "hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." Children must receive their commands with submission, like Jesus, who was subject to his parents in his youth, Luke ii. 51, and they must endure their good corrections with becoming reverence, and with a humble patience. Paul hath respect to this, when he saith, Heb. xii. 9, "We had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence." The Lord takes the stubborn and incorrigible disobedience of children, who have been chastised by their parents, so heinously, that he orders the magistrates to punish them with death, Deut. xxi. 18—21. But are those who are set over us also our fathers, "Let every soul then be subject to

the higher powers " as Paul speaks, Rom. xiii. 1. It is also proper to obey and submit to our preachers, " those who have the rule over us," as the same apostle requireth, Heb. xiii. 17. " The younger must also submit themselves unto the elder," as Peter admonisheth, 1 Peter v. 5, and servants are exhorted " to be obedient to their masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ," Eph. vi. 5.

It is true, parents have often many weaknesses and infirmaties ; they subject their children to many expences and inconveniences ; they are besides fretful, yea, sometimes wicked and intolerable : but shall we therefore refuse to conduct toward them, as becomes children ? it is never more proper to honour them than in such untoward conditions. Consider only what weaknesses and infirmities they have borne in their children : and thus we have only to pay our old score, by pitying them, and bearing patiently with their weaknesses and infirmities : " Hearken to thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old," saith the wise king, Prov. xxiii. 22. It was the conduct of wicked Ham to sport with the infirmity and weakness of his father Noah : Shem and Japhet covered his nakedness ; but Ham was cursed on account of his wickedness, and his brethren were blessed on account of their virtue, Gen. ix. 21—27. Magistrates, masters and preachers sometimes rule, like Diotrephesses, with rigour and great severity : but " we must be subject with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward," 1 Pet. ii. 18.

II. Although it is very natural to honour our parents, and equity requires that we should be obedient to God, only because he commands us, the Lord nevertheless chooseth to draw us to this duty with cords of love, promising to bestow a great reward upon our keeping of this commandment, for he saith " that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee " The Lord Jehovah, was the God of Israel, on account of the covenant established with Abraham and his seed, under the Old Testament. The Lord gave Israel, as their God, the blessed land of Canaan, to which this promise hath respect, for an inheritance and possession ; surely not for Israel's only, or principal inheritance, but as a superadded promise and inheritance, a pledge of the principal promise, that the Lord would be their God, and that in the seed of Abraham, even the Messiah, " all the families of the earth should be blessed." See Gen. xvii. 7, 8. Gal. iii. 16, 17.

The Lord promiseth a long life in this land to the children of Israel, who honour their parents. This doth not imply that a man's

life can be prolonged beyond the limits, which God hath appointed by his eternal and unchangeable decree; for "the days of man are determined, the number of his months are with God: he hath appointed his bounds, which man cannot overpass," as Job saith, Job xiv. 5. But a man's days are prolonged either with respect to others, who are snatched away in their youth; or with respect to his natural strength and expectation. Such a prolonging of days doth the Lord promise to obedient children in the land of Canaan, as in a most blessed and "a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, that spring out of vallies and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and vines and figtrees, and pomgranates, a land of oilolive and honey, a land wherein Israel should eat bread without scarceness, and in which they should not lack any thing: a land whose stones were iron, and out of whose hills they might dig brass;" thus the Lord God himself speaks of it, Deut. viii. 9—19. The Lord saith further to his people, Deut. xi. 12. "A land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are upon it, from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year." Yea, it was a land which the Lord gave to the children of Israel as their God out of, and in his free favour, in which the Messiah should appear in the flesh, "Immanuel's land," Isaiah viii. 8. Upon which God sent down all his spiritual blessings, to which he attached his worship, and which was to them a pledge of the everlasting rest. To live long in this land was a great blessing; but to be snatched out of it early, either by death, or by exile, was a grievous judgment; as the Lord threatened and inflicted it upon Israel on account of their sins, to their bitter sorrow. See this Lev. xxvi. Deut. xxviii. 2 Kings xvii. 2 Chron. xxxvi. It behooved Israel then to suffer themselves to be allured by this promise to honour their parents.

But when God gave this commandment with such a promise to Israel, did he then excuse us from it, as the Antinomians, or adversaries of the law think? By no means: Paul shows that this commandment obligeth believers under the New Testament also, when he saith, Eph. vi. 1—3. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." As Canaan was the possession and inheritance of Israel, so also "the whole earth is the inheritance of the meek," Matt. v. 5. "All things, and the world also, is theirs, because they are Christ's and God's," 1 Cor. iii. 21—23. As the Lord was the God of Israel under the Old Testament, in like manner is he now also the God of his peo-

ple, according to 2 Cor. vi. 16. It is not therefore a less blessing now to live a long life, than it was under the Old Testament; and it is not a smaller punishment now to be taken out of life, than it was under the Old Testament. Believers were not then more subject to the fear of death all their life long, from a dread of losing the land of Canaan by death, than believers are now; and Paul speaks not in Heb. ii. 15, concerning the fear of death, which should have possessed believers of the Old Testament, through an anxious concern, lest they might lose the land of Canaan. Our annotators suggest better thoughts on that passage; and we refer to them.

How, will some perhaps think, is a long life on earth a blessing? would it not be better for believers to enter betimes into heaven by death? But a long life is not opposed here to everlasting life, but to death: life is also in itself a blessing, not only to a wicked man, who, as long as he lives, is exempted from destruction, enjoys the gifts of God, and time and means for repentance; but a long life is also a blessing to the pious; for life is sweet, and all who live are afraid to die: if all the righteous should die in their youth, what would become of the world? who would restrain and convert it? but when the pious live long, they may convert others, and glorify God among them, who are alive on the earth, for which they will not have any opportunity hereafter. The Lord also bestows long life for this purpose upon his favorites, as Hezekiah showed: after the Lord had "recovered and healed him," he said to his praise; For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth," Isaiah xxxviii. 16--19. In heaven we will do this indeed more than here, but there we will have time enough. believers will not come short of heaven, nor enjoy less of it. The wicked by continuing a long time on earth, prolong their lives in their impenitence, it is therefore no blessing to them, but a curse: for "the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed," Isaiah lxv. 20. Doth a godly person die in his youth, he hath notwithstanding lived longer than an old sinner, who is dead, while he liveth: God sometimes takes his children away early, in order to preserve them from the evil, which he is about to bring on their generation, and so "they are taken away from the evil to come," Isaiah lvii. 1. like young Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, 1 Kings xiv. 12, 13. A good and desirable long life is also promised; for the Lawgiver saith, Deut. v. 16, and Paul from him, Eph vi. 3, "that thy days

may be prolonged, and it may go well with thee." We must also know that when God promiseth temporal blessings, he doth it usually upon certain conditions, and therefore that obedient children shall live long, if it shall be for the honor of God, and for their salvation: we may not extend temporal promises further than this.

The word *Jaarichoun*, which we find here in the Hebrew original, signifieth also, that "they may prolong" your days, to wit, the father, and mother, who exercise much tender care that they may prolong the blessed days of their children, pray for them, instruct them, and bless them, which they will do so much the more, when their children honour them. How ought the children then to exert themselves to perform their duty, since it depends greatly upon their parents, whether they shall be blessed. This promise ought to incite them the more, because "this commandment is the first with a promise," as the apostle testifieth, Eph. vi. 2. But how can he say this, for the second commandment hath also a promise, and it nevertheless precedes this? But we may easily understand his meaning, if we consider, that he doth not say, it is the commandment which hath first and before all the commandments a promise, but that he saith, it is the first commandment; for it is the first, and also the principal commandment of the second table, and the foundation and fence of the four following, and therefore we are in a particular manner obliged to observe this commandment, if we will not carelessly transgress the following. Or if we would understand it so, that the fifth commandment is the first in order of the commandments, that hath a promise, it is then also true, not with respect to the first, but with respect to the second table: moreover this promise is particularly applicable to the duty of honouring our parents, but the promise of the second commandment relates to keeping all the commandments of the law; for in that commandment the Lawgiver saith, "I show mercy to thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments." Since then God enforceth this fifth commandment only with such a suitable promise, therefore children must honour their parents, if they do not wish to be excluded from any share in this promise.

Further, Paul explaining and enforcing this commandment, saith that "it is right" to obey our parents, Eph. vi. 1. And is it not right and proper? for God commands it, and we must obey God on his own account; all nations have also judged it to be right and proper, and they have enjoined it: it is also naturally proper, being innate to human nature; yea, what can be more proper, than to acknowledge the superiority and supremacy of our parents over us;

for we receive all things from them, and we owe all things to them next to God. There is nothing therefore more unnatural than to refuse to honour our parents, and they who do not honour them are branded as persons who are "without natural affection," 2 Tim. iii. 3.

The instructor adds another motive to these and especially that we may be moved to have patience with the weaknesses and infirmities of our parents: "Since," saith he, "it pleases God to govern us by their hand." So that we must honour our parents in obedience to God. Therefore Peter saith, "submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake," 1 Peter ii. 13. When then it is God's will to govern us by such weak and faulty parents, we have no right to be displeased with them, and to withdraw ourselves from them.

APPLICATION.

The Pharisees sought in a most shameful manner to make this commandment of none effect, when they said Matt. xv. 5. "If any man say to his father or mother, It is a gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, and honour not his father or mother, he shall be free." As if children were not under any obligation whatsoever to their parents, but when they brought either them, or the Lord a gift for an offering, (*Corban*, Mark v. 11) by which their parents might be profited, that it was a wonderful favour, which merited the thanks of their parents. But the Saviour withstood them manfully, and to their faces, for they deserved to be severely reproved, because "they made the command of God of no effect by their tradition," Matt. xv. 6.

The Papists do not conduct better, when they discharge children from their obligation to their parents; for they teach, that children may enter into a monastery, and may contract marriage against the mind of their parents, yea, that they may refuse to obey their parents altogether, and even banish them, if the church of Rome declare them to be heretics, and excommunicate them: but is there aught, that shows more plainly than this, that the Romish church is antichristian, and that the Pope is, according to 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. "the man of sin, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped: so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God?" for he magnifies himself above God, when he discharges the creatures

of God from their obligation to the Lord, and to his law. Therefore our forefathers justly withdrew from his arrogated authority, which he had assumed by robbery, that they might submit themselves to the Lord alone, according to his law, and might obey him.

But ought the magistrates also to be acknowledged as fathers, the Mennonites act then improperly, when they assert that no Christian ought to hold the office of a magistrate, because it doth not become him, and doth not comport with Christian humility. But were not the higher powers instituted by God? There is surely no power but of God: "the powers that be are ordained of God," as Paul teacheth, Rom. xiii. 1. Did not God institute government even before the fall? man had dominion not only over every irrational creature, but the man obtained of the Lord dominion over the woman also, Gen. iii 16. Let it not be thought, that this was a consequence of sin, for it proceeded from the creation of the man in the image of God, and from the creation of the woman after the image of the man, and of, and for the man, as the apostle teacheth, 1 Cor. xi. 7—10. David was a great king, but he was nevertheless very humble, as he showed himself, 2 Sam. vi. 21, 22. Psalm cxxxi. Joseph of Arimathea was an excellent and humble Christian, he was not ashamed to desire the crucified Christ of Pilate, and to lay him in his own new tomb; and he was notwithstanding "an honourable counsellor," Luke xxiii. 50—53. Neither Christ nor his apostles advised the magistrates, after their conversion, to abdicate their magistracy, any more than they advised fathers to renounce their fatherhood.

"The law entered that the offence might abound," saith the preacher of the gospel, Rom. v. 20 But is the law then sin? doth it teach sin? God forbid. But it discovereth sin, that we may see it the more, and that the sinner may be the more humbled on account of it: "for by the law is the knowledge of sin," saith the same man, Rom. iii. 20. And to what end doth sin abound by the law? it is that "grace may much more abound," Rom. v. 20. If we will then improve this commandment to our profit, we must compare and examine our conduct by the fifth commandment, that we may behold and humble ourselves for our shameful deviations from it, and may thus from an anxious concern flee to Christ, the end of the law, with a desire of reconciliation and sanctification.

Come then, friends, I have now set before you the demand of this commandment, suffer me to discover to you also your transgressions of it. Can ye all say with more truth, than that "ruler who came to Jesus, and fell down on his knees before him, all these things have

I kept from my youth up?" Luke xviii. 18—21. Mark x. 17—20. Let the actions of your childhood, of your youth and your riper years declare.

1. Where and when have we seen in you that actual respect and reverence for your parents? are they not often treated by you in an uncivil, impudent and shameless manner, and despised as if they were your inferiors? Surely men do not behave better among us, than the Jews, "who set light by their father and mother," Ezek. xxii. 7. They do not conduct better toward the magistrates: "They despise government, they are presumptuous, they are selfwilled, and are not afraid to speak evil of dignities," like those who will be punished with the greatest severity in the day of judgment, of whom Peter speaks, 2 Pet ii. 10. We see that grievous judgment, which God foretels would befal his people. Isaiah iii. 5, that "the child should behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable." The preachers, though they conduct ever so unblamably, must suffer reproach: "hypocritical mockers at feasts will gnash upon them with their teeth," as David complained in his time, Psalm xxxv. 16. When the preachers faithfully detect, and oppose their opinions, concerns, and daily iniquities, will not these wicked men cry out then, like "the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, what will this babbler say?" Acts vii. 18. And how proud are our servants! how spitefully and contemptuously do they behave toward their masters and mistresses! truly just as if they were Ishmaelites, children of Hagar, who despised her mistress, Gen. xvi. 5.

2. And how have ye manifested your love to your father and mother? have ye not often shown an aversion from your parents? have they not been in your way, and been even a burthen to you? and perhaps they are still, so that ye wish for their death, that they may not be a restraint to you, and that ye may inherit their estate. Men show thus, that they are degenerate, and without natural affection. They do not even think that they ought to love the magistrates, they hate and curse them, as the citizens of Shechem cursed Abimelech, Judges ix. 27. They behave no better toward their preachers: "They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly," saith the Lord, Amos v. 10. proper Ahabs, who "hate the prophet, because he doth not prophesy good concerning them, but evil," 1 Kings xxii. 8. And where shall we now find a servant, who would be willing to serve his lord for ever from love to him, like the Hebrew servant? Exod. xxi. 5.

3. And how unfaithful is the present generation! children imagine that they are at liberty to rob their parents, which Solomon records as exceedingly destructive, Prov. xxviii. 25. To support parents, and "to requite them," as Paul admonisheth, 1 Tim. v. 4. appears so strange to many children, that they imagine with the Pharisees, that parents ought not to look for any advantage from their children: they will sooner suffer them to depend upon the publick aims, than sustain them; or if they will not be so shameless, they will reach them a fragment or a morsel; but with what coldness and contempt! If they can rob the magistrates of toll and tribute, they will not scruple to do it, provided they can only conceal it. Preachers have no reason to complain in this province; but it is sufficiently known how they fare elsewhere, and that they are obliged to perform their labour with grief. It would be hard to decry all our servants, as faithless; but it is sufficiently known that some are unfaithful through slothfulness and carelessness about matters which require their attention: yea, some have declined so far, that they rob their masters and mistresses, like Onesimus, though he was afterwards converted, and O, that all unfaithful servants would endeavour to become so happy!

4. We ought to submit ourselves to the good instruction and correction of parents with due obedience. But if ye had given heed to their instructions in your youth, would ye not have been wiser now? but ye have cast them behind your backs. How sullenly did ye behave, when they either bade, or admonished you to do any thing, so that they were obliged to chastise you; and O, that they had done that oftner! folly would not then perhaps have holden you captive, as it doth. And when they chastised you, how angry did ye become, yea, were more hardened than before! Reflect on your youth, that ye may see that heathenish abomination, even "disobedience to parents," Rom. i. 39, and may be ashamed. How disobedient are men also to the magistrates! how many evil thoughts rise up in their hearts against them! If ye only durst, and were not afraid that they would punish you, ye would rebel against them, no less than Korah and his company. Ye ought surely to submit to the instructions and reproofs of your preachers, with due obedience; for they seek not yours, but you: but how backward are men to this! "they say to the seers, see not; and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits. Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us," Isaiah xxx. 10, 11. Do persons behave in this manner toward their parents,

magistrates, and preachers we need not then wonder that servants are also so stubborn and wayward, contrary to what the apostle saith, Titus ii. 9. There are still servants, who are obedient, but it is not from obedience to the Lord, but "with eye-service, as men-pleasers," Eph. vi. 6.

5. Do men behave in this manner, when their parents, magistrates, preachers, and others are competent, we may then easily conceive how they conduct, when they have weaknesses and infirmities. Will not children, subjects, hearers and servants, as if they were the proper offspring of Ham, sport then with those weaknesses and infirmities, and report them to others, and expose father and mother, and all who are set over them, to contempt and hatred?

We may see then, and we need not search for it industriously, how it happens that families and civil communities are so sinful and and disorderly, yea, that the church is clothed with the filthy garb of worldlymindedness, corruption, and indifference. Or do ye think that ye are not guilty in these respects? Ye surely know better. It is well known to you, that ye have not done all that God requires of you in obedience to him. I repeat it, think on your conduct in your youth and in your childhood: imagine not that because this or that was done by you in your childhood, it was therefore no sin: ye were then also subject to the Lawgiver. And do not presume that the Lord hath forgotten and forgiven your iniquities, because they were committed by you a long time since, and because ye yourselves have forgotten them. David, a man after God's own heart, who trusted in the Lord from his youth, as he saith, Psalm lxxi. 5, 6, was troubled in his manly years on account of the sins of his youth," Psalm xxv 7. And if ye have not yet been converted and reconciled to God, your whole life hath been without God, and sinful, and all those sins lie yet upon you, and ye have reason to think that the Lord hath a lively remembrance of them, that he will upbraid you with them, as he did Judah and Israel, when he said, Jer. xxxii. 30. "For the children of Israel, and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth."

Perhaps ye will say, I know that I have conducted badly enough, but what shall I do now? it is indeed so, and what hath been done cannot be undone, and ye forget upon this, according to your old custom, your grievous and manifold sins. But friends, this will not obtain the pardon of your sins for you; and therefore pause a while here, and hearken to what I will say unto you, that ye may be humbled, reconciled to God, and changed. (a) Those sins of yours are exceedingly abominable; for they have been committed against

the most high God; against his express command, and particularly against the first command of the second table: against his promise and love, with which he would allure you, and which ye have despised; against natural equity; and ye have also shown, that ye were degenerate, corrupt and unnatural. (b) Ye are cursed on account of these sins, and all who hear and observe it must assent to it. "Cursed is he that setteth light by his father and mother: and all the people shall say Amen," according to the register of curses, which was to be proclaimed from mount Ebal, before all Israel, Deut. xxviii. 16. (c) Ye have long since forfeited your lives: for a long life is promised only to children, who obey their parents. Ye are still alive, but it is no blessing to you; for the Lord is not your covenant God; the Lord fills your life with bitter things on account of the iniquities of your youth, and your present iniquities.

Do we say this from anger, and that we may cause you to despair? It is true we wish that every one of you said from Isaiah lvii. 10, "There is no hope, that he did not find the life of his hand, but was grieved," yet we do not say this from anger, or that we may deprive you of all hope of pardon and salvation, but that we may save you, and direct you to the good and holy way. Are ye then desirous of being delivered from destruction, (a) Lay your misery seriously to heart; to be so unconcerned about it is deadly to you. Therefore weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you," James v. 1. Alas, that with Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 19, ye did, as confounded, "smite upon your thigh, on account of the sins of your youth." (b) Beware nevertheless of being, like Cain, terrified to such a degree, as to be driven from the Lord; but come to him with lowly humility, and with a confession of your abominations from your youth until this day, like Israel, who turning to the Lord, said, Jer. iii. 25, "We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us; for we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers from our youth unto this day." (c) Know that Christ the Son of God was cut off for such sins also out of the land of the living, and that he fulfilled this commandment also, when he was subject to his parents, Luke ii. 51. And all this only, that he might satisfy the justice of God, and purchase the forfeited life;" for him who knew no sin hath God made to be sin for us, that we might be the righteousness of God in him," as Paul teacheth, 2 Cor. v. 21. (d) Be not nevertheless too ready to apply this to yourselves, but inquire whether he calls you also to his righteousness, and proffers it to you; yea, endeavour to obtain an assurance, that he invites you thereto, and that he is ready to impart all his

merits to you. He cries to you also, "Look unto me, and be saved, all ye ends of the earth," Isaiah xlv. 22. Therefore flee unto him, accept of him, and rest not, until he favours your souls with his righteousness. Hear what he hath foretold concerning our days, Isaiah xlv 24, "Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: to him shall men come." And thus, "Christ would be to you the end of the law for righteousness," according to Rom. x. 4.

Those who have taken their refuge to him, ought to make use of the law, and thus also of this commandment, for a rule of a thankful life, and therefore,

1. Wonder, rejoice and praise him for preserving you so long alive, until his time of love to you was come. Hear how David cries out concerning this to the Lord, Psalm xxi. 4. "He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever." He might have taken you away long ere now by a shameful death, your sentence was written from ancient times, and particularly, Prov. xxx. 17. "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." But the Lord hath spared you.

2. Let the love and the kindness of God to you induce you to honour your father and mother, and all who are set over you, with reverence, love, fidelity, obedience and patience. Do this nevertheless from an acknowledgment, that their authority over you was given them by God. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers," saith Paul, Rom. xiii. 1. And thus also from obedience to the Lord, "Not with eye-service, as menpleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart: with good will doing service to the Lord, and not to men," Eph. vi. 6, 7. Do it also in all things. "Ye children" saith the same apostle further, Col. iii. 20. obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing to the Lord." We must nevertheless not do this, when they who are set over us command us aught that thwarts the command of God. We must "obey our parents, but it must be in the Lord," Eph. vi. 1. "We ought to obey God rather than men," said the apostles, Acts. v. 29. We may "not love our father and mother more than Jesus," Matt. x. 37. We must sooner "hate our father and mother," Luke xiv. 26. See a noble example of this in the Levites, Exod. xxxii. 26, 27, 28, 29. Deut. xxxiii. 9. Neither ought they to be obeyed, when they command aught that militates against any official duty of their children. Solomon, although he honoured his mother greatly, would nevertheless not hearken to her, when she spoke to him for Adonijah, who nourished insurrection in

his heart, 1 Kings ii. 17—23. The duties of marriage do also exempt children from this duty: it is the law of marriage, that "a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and that they twain shall be one flesh." Although children, who are married ought to hearken in many respects to the good advice of their parents. It is especially the duty of children, to inform their parents, and to ask their consent, when they are about to contract marriage. God hath given parents power "to take wives for their sons, and to give their daughters to husbands," Jer. xxix. 6. Abraham undertook to provide a wife for his son Isaac, Gen. xxiv. and Samson asked a wife of his parents, Judges xiv. 1, 2.

But when God commands children to perform certain duties toward their parents, he then supposeth that parents owe also certain duties to their children; for the commands of the law must be understood in the most extensive sense, and must be explained reciprocally: for instance, God forbids *men* to commit adultery, to kill, &c. as may be seen in the Hebrew original, but he doth then intend women also. Paul explaining the commandment before us, Eph. vi. 1—9 teaches that parents are obliged to perform certain duties to their children, and masters to their servants. The reason why the Lawgiver doth not express the duty of parents here, which consists not so much in honouring, as in loving their children, is because nature and their own bowels urge them to that love. All then, who are honoured with the name of father and mother, are obliged to conduct themselves well toward their children, and those over whom they are placed.

1. Parents ought to take a suitable care of their children, providing them with food and with necessaries; "If any man provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel," saith Paul, 1 Tim. v. 8. He teacheth also that "parents ought to lay up for their children," 2 Cor. xii. 14. They ought especially to dispose their souls, their noblest part, to godliness, and salvation, and therefore to instruct them, according to their capacities, in the mysteries of God, and admonish them, as Solomon adviseth Prov. xxii. 6. and as Paul enjoins, Eph. vi. 4. So Abraham acted, Gen. xviii. 19, and David, Prov. iv. 3, 4. Fathersinlaw, and mothersinlaw, guardians, godfathers, and godmothers, and grandparents are obliged to do this also. See 1 Tim v. 4. But parents ought to enforce their instructions with a pious example, as Joshua said, "as for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord," Joshua xxiv. 15. But inasmuch as Solomon saith, Prov. xxii. 15. "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but

the rod of correction shall drive it far from him," therefore love requires that parents should "correct their children betimes," according to Prov. xiii. 24. God inflicted a dreadful judgment on the house of Eli, because "he did not restrain his sons, when they made themselves vile," 1 Sam. iii. 13. Yet parents ought not to be too severe, so as to provoke their children to wrath, and vex them, lest they be discouraged," Eph. vi. 4. Col. iii. 21. But nothing will be of any service to the children, unless the Lord bless whatever we do, and therefore parents ought to pray for their chidren, as Abraham and Job did, Gen xvii. 18. Job. i. 6.

2. Magistrates ought, according to the advice of Jethro, Exod. xviii. 21. "to be able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness." Their elevated stations ought not to render them proud, nor to puff them up so as to make them highminded, as the Lord enjoins with respect to the kings of Israel, Deut. xvii. 20. They must "love their people," as it is said of the centurion at Capernaum, Luke vii. 5. They ought, like Julius, "to be courteous," Acts xxvii. 3. They ought to take care, that their subjects enjoy peace, a free trade, and prosperity, that they may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness aad honesty; for which purpose the subjects must also pray for them, as the apostle requireth, 1 Tim. ii. 1—3. The kingdom of Solomon was greatly blessed in these respects, 1 Kings iv. 25. x. 27. It is also the duty of magistrates to pray for their subjects, as Solomon and Hezekiah did, 1 Kings viii. 2 Chron. xxx. 18—20. They must execute judgment and justice with a holy awe and dread of the Lord, and without respecting the persons of men: "Jehoshaphat said to the judges, take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for men, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you, take heed and do it, for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts," 2 Chron. xix. 1—11. Magistrates will be in a particular manner acceptable to God, when they cherish the church in a tender manner, according to the prophecy concerning them, Isaiah xlix. 23, but of this we have spoken on the thirty-first Lord's day.

3. The preachers ought also to be careful to feed and govern their congregations, as fathers. But this we have taught also on the thirty-first Lord's day.

Masters and mistresses should thank God, that they are not obliged to serve, but may be served by others. And it is therefore their duty to beware of treating their servants with too great severity, appointing them more labour than is meet, and rewarding them

too sparingly, or speaking too harshly to them, and threatening them. Hear what Paul saith to this purpose, Eph. vi. 9. "Ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with him." And see what he saith, Col. iv. 1. Take no heed, as Solomon wisely adviseth, of every mistep of your servants, Eccl. vii. 21. It is proper to wink at some things, ye yourselves have grievous faults: and when ye serve God perfectly without fault, then and not before seek for perfect servants. Above all, seek servants who strive to serve the Lord, like David, "who would be served by such as walked in a perfect way," Psalm ci. 6, 7. Instruct, exhort, and afford them time to serve the Lord, especially on the Lord's day; for the sabbath was ordained for menservants and womenservants as well as for you, and their souls are as dear to the Lord as yours.

If all and every one of us in particular, whether children and those who are subject to others, or parents, and those who are set over others, would discharge their duty in this manner, what a blessed domestic, ecclesiastical, and civil state should we have? We might then say with David, Psalm cxliv. 15. "Happy is that people, that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord." Amen.

THE

SIXTH COMMANDMENT

EXPLAINED.

XL. LORD'S DAY.

Exod. xx. 13. Thou shalt not kill.

Q. 105. *What doth God require in the sixth command?*

A. That neither in thoughts, nor words, nor gestures, much less in deeds, I dishonour, hate, wound, or kill my neighbour, by myself, or by another; but that I lay aside all desire of revenge: also that I hurt not myself, or wilfully expose myself to any danger, wherefore also the magistrate is armed with the sword to prevent murder.

Q. 106. *But this command seems to speak only of murder?*

A. In forbidding murder God teaches us, that he abhors the causes thereof; such as envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge; and that he accounts all these as murder.

Q. 107. *But is it enough that we do not kill any man in the manner mentioned above?*

A. No; for when God forbids envy, hatred, and anger, he commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves; to show patience, peace, meekness, mercy, and all kindness toward him, and prevent his hurt as much as in us lies; and that we do good, even to our enemies.

"THE Lord killeth and maketh alive," thus sings Hannah to the honour of the most high God, 1 Sam. ii. 6. The right of life and death belongs to him only, who hath a sovereign power over all things; and who hath this but the Lord God alone, who can make alive as easily as he can kill? He requires that his people should attend seriously to this, when he saith, Deut. xxxii. 39, "See now I, even I am he, and there is no God with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound and I heal." Job saith, Job xii. 10, "in his hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind." Even sovereign princes cannot withdraw themselves from this sovereign power of God: "He will cut off the spirit of princes: he is terrible to the kings of the earth," Psalm lxvi. 12. Therefore those high potentates take too much upon themselves, yea, they exalt themselves to the seat of God, when with the king of Babylon, "they kill and save alive whom they will," Dan. v. 19. Are they raised above their subjects, it is not to bereave them of their life, but to preserve it; do they not bear the sword in vain, they may not however use it as they please, but as God pleaseth with respect to killing and saving alive: "The power," saith Paul to the Romans, "is the minister of God to thee for good, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil," Rom. xiii. 3, 4. But the highest sovereignty, and the supreme right of life and death God hath reserved for himself, and he prohibits it to all others, when he proclaims from heaven, with a display of his exalted majesty, out of the burning fire, amidst darkness, gloominess, thunder, lightning and a tempest, to every one, "Thou shalt not kill."

The Lord God hath set parents and others over us, and he requires in the fifth commandment, that we should honour them. But that families, over which parents are set, and the commonwealth, over which magistrates are set, may not be destroyed, he requires that no man should kill his neighbour.

The instructor in explaining this commandment shows,

I. What sins are forbidden in it, Q. 105, 106.

II. What virtues are commanded in it, Q. 107.

I. The sin is considered first in itself, Q. 105, and then with respect to its causes, Q. 106.

The sin is in general killing; which we commit with respect to others, and with respect to ourselves. The second table of the law enjoins the love of our neighbour, and so this sixth commandment requireth the love of our neighbour's life; and therefore it doth not favour the opinion of Pythagoras, who taught that we might not

kill even a beast, because he imagined that the souls of men passed into beasts. We may and must kill wild animals, that they may not devour men: God took care that they did not prevail, nor multiply too abundantly for Israel, Exod xxiii. 29. David slew a lion and a bear, that had taken a sheep from the flock, 1 Sam. xvii. 34, 35. "Every beast of the earth, every fowl of the air, all that moveth on the earth, and all the fishes of the sea, every moving thing that liveth, shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things," saith the Lord to Noah and his posterity, Gen. ix. 23. "Brute beasts are indeed made to be taken and destroyed," as Peter saith, 2 Pet. ii. 12. It is not however to be approved of, but it is inhuman to be cruel to cattle, and to torment them in a ruthless manner: "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel," saith Solomon, Prov. xii. 10. When we exercise such cruelty and torture, we compel "the creatures to groan," Rom. viii. 20—22. This command therefore forbids killing men.

Although subjects are the neighbours of their magistrates, they may nevertheless be put to death by their magistrates on account of grievous misdemeanours, which tend to destroy the commonwealth. We have observed before from Paul, Rom. xiii. 1—4, that the magistrates are armed by God with the sword for this purpose. The Lord hath expressly commanded, Gen. ix. 6, "that if any shed man's blood, his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God made he man." It is not left to the discretion of the higher powers to release, or pardon the murderer; it is said to them, Num. xxxv. 31, "Ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death." It fared exceedingly ill with Saul, because he spared the devoted Amalekites; and with Ahab, because he showed mercy improperly to Benhadad, 1 Sam. xv. 1—35. 1 Kings xx. 32—43. It is therefore an abominable practice of the Papists, to open churches and monasteries in order to shelter and secure murderers from the sword of the magistrates, who may not take them thence. God required that they should "take the murderer from his altar, and put him to death," Exod xxi. 14. Solomon did not spare Joab, although he had fled to the tabernacle of the Lord, and had caught hold on the horns of the altar, but ordered him to be slain there, 1 Kings ii. 28—35. It is therefore silly in the followers of Menno and Socinus, to assert that magistrates have no right under the New Testament to put malefactors to death with the sword; but if this did not become Christian magistrates, whose life would then be safe? There is al-

so no reason, why we may not punish a murderer now, as well as formerly. Magistrates ought nevertheless to beware of putting an innocent person to death, like the wicked Ahabs, Joashes, Manassehs, Pilates and Herods, that they may not subject themselves and their people to bloodguiltiness, and the wrath of God.

How dreadful is war! how many thousands of innocent persons are killed in it! neither shall they who excite unjust wars escape the judgment of the just supreme Avenger: We may not however, with the Mennonites and Socinians, condemn a just war, because God forbids us to kill; for no man could lead a tranquil and peaceable life, if men did not resist their malicious foes by a righteous war; and besides this, the people of God, after this commandment was given to them, waged wars by the order of God, and according to laws of war enacted by him. John the Baptist never advised the soldiers, nor Peter Cornelius the centurion, nor Paul Sergius Paulus the deputy, to resign their military callings, after they were converted to Christianity. It is true, "we may not resist evil, and we must love our enemies," as Christ saith, Matt. v. 39—48. But is this said to the magistrates concerning the enemies of the commonwealth? surely no: but to the disciples concerning their private enemies, against whom it did not become them to wage war. The Lord God foretold indeed, that "nation should not lift up sword against nation, nor learn war any more," Isaiah ii. 4. xi. 6—9. But if these prophecies condemn all wars, they are then not yet fulfilled; for experience teacheth us that all wars have not yet ceased: it is therefore evident, that these words foretel the peace, which should be effected by the death of Christ between Jews and Gentiles, as appears from the connexion of those passages, which do not therefore condemn lawful wars.

Although it is exceedingly melancholic, when a person, urged by danger, and unable to rescue himself by entreaties, by protestations, by crying or fleeing, kills in the instant of attack, not from revenge, but only that he may defend himself, his neighbour, who assaults him in a murderous manner; yet this is not to be charged upon him as a prohibited killing. If men might, without being guilty of murder, kill a thief, when he broke into a house by night to steal, according to Exodus xxii. 2, how much more may we then kill a person, who attacks our lives, if we cannot otherwise deliver ourselves from death. God hath armed almost every living creature with natural weapons, in order that he may defend himself against his enemies, when his life is in danger: and shall not the reasonable creature then defend himself in such a situation, but submit to be

murdered? It is true, I ought to love my neighbour as myself; but I ought then to love myself first and most, and thus seek to preserve mine own life, more than my neighbour's.

It is also a grievous misfortune, when a person kills his neighbour by accident, unawares, and without hating him beforetime; for instance, a person "hews wood, and the axe slips from the helve, and lights upon his neighbour, and he dies;" this is a grievous misfortune, yet it may not be reckoned such a killing of a person, as deserves punishment. The Lord declares that such unfortunate slayers are "innocent," and he would screen them from the avengers of blood, and therefore ordered six cities and places of refuge to be severed for them in the land of Israel, Exod. xxi. 13. Deut. xix. 1—10.

But when the Lawgiver saith, "thou shalt not kill," he speaks then of a private person's killing his neighbour from hatred, revenge and with forethought: either "by himself or by another."

A person kills his neighbour by himself, 1 "With his thoughts," when he curses him in his thoughts, and wishes that this or that evil, yea, death itself may befal him. Which Solomon opposeth, when he saith, Eccl. x. 20, "Curse not the King, no not in thy thought, and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber." How often doth the sinner think, when any person doth not act as he wishes, "When will he die, and his name perish?" as David's enemies longed for his death, Psalm xli. 5. Doth not this manifest a murderous disposition? If all those should die, whom the sinner wished dead, the whole world would soon die out. It is with equal propriety to be reckoned murder, when a person contrives with himself how to injure his neighbour, when "one imagineth evil in his heart against another," which God forbids, Zech. viii. 17. It is also to be accounted murder, when with Saul we "consent to the death" of the innocent, Acts viii. 1.

2. A person kills his neighbour also with spiteful, severe, piercing and satyrick "words," with chiding and railing, with which David was sorely wounded, who therefore complained to the Lord, Psalm lvii. 4, "My soul is among lions, and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword." It is more especially a killing of our neighbour, when we report his behaviour in the most unfavourable manner to his enemy, and endanger his life; would Doeg ever have been obliged to employ his hands in slaying with the edge of the sword eighty and five priests, and all that breathed [illegible] had not reported in the most disadvantageous manner

to Saul the friendship which Ahimelech had shown to David? See the history, 1 Sam. xxii. 6. We must reckon those also to be not less guilty of murder, who falsely accuse an innocent person to the judge, and demand his death, as the Jews repeatedly acted toward the Saviour, and became thus "the betrayers and murderers of that Just One," as Stephen upbraids them, Acts vii. 52. Peter also convinceth them, Acts ii. 23," that they had by wicked hands crucified and slain him."

3. A person can be guilty of this sin also with his "gestures," when his countenance, like the index of the heart, discovers that he harbours malicious inclinations against his neighbour: one while the murderous mind of the sinner will affect his visage with paleness, then it will cause him to blush, one while his countenance will be bloated, then it will be wrinkled, every glance of his eyes is, as it were, an act of murder, and darts forth fiery flames of burning anger, his nostrils widen, and breathe forth threatenings and slaughter, or, as Solomon expresseth it, "An ungodly man diggeth up evil, and in his lips there is, as it were, a burning fire: he shutteth his eyes to devise froward things; moving his lips, he bringeth evil to pass," Prov. xvi. 27, 30. Or that we may depict it to you in Cain, who murdered his brother, "He was very wroth, and his countenance fell," Gen. iv. 5, 6.

4. If we may not kill our neighbour, with thoughts, words or gestures, "much less may we do it with deeds." We do this, (a) by "dishonouring" our neighbour, injuring him with respect to his honour, which is dearer to many than their life, reproaching him, and bringing him into contempt. It was to David "as a sword in his bones, when his enemies reproached him," Psalm xlii. 10. The Lord himself takes it exceedingly ill, when a man dishonours his neighbour; it is his will, that "he who saith to his brother, Raca, shall be punishable by the council; and that he who saith, thou fool, shall be punishable by hellfire," Matt. v. 22. (b) Or "by wounding" him, which may easily bring him to his end. If we should inflict a wound upon a person, which is not mortal, but which should occasion a fever, or some other calamity, of which he should die, would we not then be the cause of his death? It was therefore a righteous recompence, which the Lord ordained for such offences, Lev. xxiv. 19, 20. "If a man cause a blemish in his neighbour; as he hath done, so shall it be done unto him: breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth," &c. See also Deut. xix. 21. (c) Neither can we acquit a person of actual murder, who endangers the life of his neighbour: "When a man built a house, he was

obliged to make a battlement for the roof, that he might not bring blood upon his house, if any man fell from it," Deut. xxii. 8. "If a man knew that his ox was wont to push, and he kept him not in, and the ox killed a man or woman, the ox was to be stoned, and his owner was also to be put to death," according to the commandment of the Lord, Ex. xxi. 29. (d) But it is a greater offence, when a man attacks the life of his neighbour, and deprives him of it, either with an instrument of iron, or with a stone, or with a weapon of wood," See Numb. xxxv. 16, 17, 18, or by witchcraft, that evil work of the flesh, of which the apostle speaks, Gal. v. 20. If this be done treacherously, under a pretence of friendship, "with a kiss, as Joab slew Abner and Amasa," 2 Sam iii. 27. xx. 9, 10, it exceeds all other abominations. Although duels, which are fought by two persons, after a previous challenge, are not to be reckoned among acts of treachery, they cannot however be defended, but merit the utmost abhorrence; for what can be imagined more horrible, than that two persons enter the lists with one another, determined either to die themselves, or to kill their neighbour, or to perish both of them? How! is a man lord of his own life, or of his neighbour's, that he may attack it, and take it from the earth? Let no man think, that he betrays an abject spirit, when he declines to retrieve his injured honour by challenging his adversary, or cowardice, when he doth not accept a challenge: no, the magnanimous generosity, and generous magnanimity of man will not suffer him to seek his honour in shameful, yea, in murderous duels, but it teaches him to despise the person, who reproaches, or challenges him. Doth not he, who prefers the greater to the less, even life to honour, excel him, who values the less more than the greater, even honour more than life? But I apprehend that such combatants do not understand that holy magnanimity which provides for the welfare of the soul. It is the act of fools to excuse this abominable practice with the example of David, who engaged in a combat with Goliath, 1 Sam. xviii. 32—50, for David did that by and with the authority of the king of Israel, against an open enemy of Israel, who had defied the armies of God and of Israel, with an assurance that he should obtain the victory, and from a powerful impulse of the Holy Spirit, but not seduced by vain glory. When our duellists have, like David, fought with a lion and a bear, let them then see whether they can avail themselves of this heroic action of David.

We kill our neighbour not only by ourselves, but also by others, either by commanding and appointing others to do it: as David

commanded Joab to set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and to withdraw his assistance from him, which order Joab obeying, it occasioned the death of Uriah, and of many others with him, 2 Sam. xi. 14—17. But hear how Nathan addresses David on account of this action, "Thou hast slain Uriah the Hittite with the sword," 2 Sam. xii. 9. Or by procuring others to pronounce an unjust sentence, as Naboth perished: nevertheless Ahab was upbraided with putting him to death, although the judges and false witnesses, who were suborned by Jezabel, had done it in Ahab's name, 1 Kings xxi. Or by giving our consent, as Paul before his conversion consented to the death of the confessors of the Lord, Acts xxvi. 10.

Whether a person kill his neighbour by himself, or by another, it is an exceedingly dreadful sin; for the murderer destroys the best and fairest workmanship of God on earth, even man," who was made but a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour, and set over the works of God's hands:" he who kills him violates also the "image of God," as the Lord himself declareth, Gen. ix. 6. He injures the community, and despatches the unconverted sinner to hell, without allowing him time for repentance: he makes himself like wicked Cain, yea like his father the devil, the murderer of man, as John and his Master speak, 1 John iii. 12. John viii. 44. The blood of the slain man crieth for vengeance, and tortures the conscience, as we see in the first murderer, Gen. iv. 10—14 It cannot be atoned, except by an ignominious death, according to the law of vengeance, enacted by God, Gen. ix. 6. The murderer shall not obtain eternal life, 1 John iii. 15. Yea, "the second death in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," is the portion of murderers, Rev. xx. 8. "The law was made," as Paul testifieth, 1 Tim. i. 9, "for murderers" to their condemnation.

Is it such a fearful sin to murder our neighbour, who then can express in adequate terms the horrible conduct of those parents, who murder their children? It is surely unnatural to rage against our own bowels. It hath nevertheless been frequently seen, that parents have been transported to this horrid deed, when they suffered famine or poverty, and were unable to procure food for their children, or to behold their distress. Often, yea, oftner than we are aware, do giddy and wanton women, who have become pregnant by whoredom, destroy their unborn, or newly born infants. Verily a work of base, degenerate, unnatural, and inhuman persons of the human race. But it appears inconceivable, that human be-

ings can be so blinded, and apostatize so far from God, that they can be inclined to such an evil work from I know not what religious principle, "giving their firstborn to be a sacrifice for their transgression, and the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul," Micha vi. 7. The heathens nevertheless, like the king of the Moabites, 2 Kings iii. 17, defiled themselves in a shameful manner with this sin: "They knew the judgment of God, that they who committed such things were worthy of death" Rom. i 32, and that blood must be given for blood, and soul for soul to satisfy the divine justice; blood, the soul of beasts, could not atone for the guilt of reasonable creatures; therefore nothing was more proper for this than the blood and souls of their dear children. It might admit of some kind of excuse, that those blinded nations, who were destitute of the divine revelation concerning the proper surety, deviated to such a conduct; but that the peculiar people of God, who were daily instructed concerning the future atoning sacrifice of the Messiah, "should slay their children in the valleys, should offer them up, and cause them to pass through the fire unto Moloch and the idols, to consume them," Isaiah lvii. 5. Jer. xxxii. 35. Ezek. xvi. 20, 21. xxiii. 39, this, I say, was more intolerable than the atrocious child-murdering of the heathens. Neither did the Lord suffer those murders of his people to remain unrevenged; it was on account of this sin, as well as others, that the Lord God said of the Jews, Ezek. xxiii. 46, 47. "I will bring up a company upon them, and will give them to be removed and spoiled; and the company shall stone them with stones, and despatch them with their swords; they shall slay their sons and their daughters, and burn up their houses with fire."

It will perhaps be said, no person can surpass the actions of those wicked men. We see nevertheless still greater abominations: the sinner, deceived by him, who was a murderer of man from the beginning, becomes sometimes so outrageous, that he lays his hands on his own life, and destroys himself, either from despair with Judas, Matt. xxvii. 5 or from angry vexation, because he is not honoured as much as others, on which account Ahithophel hanged himself, 2 Sam. xvii. 23, or like Saul and his armourbearer, that he may not fall into the hands of his enemies, and be reproached and tormented by them, 1 Chron. x. 4, 5. Those seamen do not conduct better, who, in order to escape the cruelty of their enemies, set fire to their powder, and blow up their ship with all who are in it. Certainly no sin is more unnatural than selfmurder: for "who hath ever yet hated his own flesh? no man," saith Paul, Eph. v.

29. Such a sinner dies in his sin, like Saul, 1 Chron. x. 13. Is "he who hateth his brother a murderer," and do we learn from the apostle, that "no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him," the eternal perdition of such selfmurderers is not less certain. Are there madmen, who are utterly ignorant of what they do, and who destroy themselves in their madness, we cannot judge of their eternal issue. To excuse killing ourselves with the conduct of Samson, who destroyed himself with the Philistines, Judges xvi. 28, 29, 30, is unreasonable; for Samson did that as a judge of Israel, as an act of wonderful heroism, and when the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, as in all his other heroical actions, and so "in faith," Heb. xi. 32.

Although persons, who "wilfully expose themselves to danger," out of their proper callings, as those who climb high and dive deep, fearless sailors, venturous riders, and giddy rope-dancers, do not lay hands designedly on their own lives, they are nevertheless not altogether guiltless of self-murder; for if they perish in such dangerous actions, are they not themselves the authors of their death? do they not tempt God by their unadvised conduct? and who urges them on, but he who was a murderer of man from the beginning? did not he endeavour to seduce the Son of God to this sin, that he might, if possible, despatch him thereby? Matt. iv. 5, 6, 7. Nor are those less guilty of bereaving themselves of their lives, who injure their health and spirits by their dissoluteness, by excess in eating and drinking, and by shameful fornication and adultery, so that "they do not live out half their days," as David speaks, Psalm lv. 23, for "who hath wo? who hath sorrow? who hath wounds without cause? they that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine:" thus asks and answers the wisest of kings, Prov. xxiii. 29, 30. And of the unchaste person he saith, Prov. v. 11, that "he mourneth at the last, when his flesh and his body are consumed." If we will not render ourselves guilty of this sin, "we must not hurt ourselves" neither: a priest may not do this, although he mourn ever so sorely for a deceased person; the Lord forbids it, Lev. xxv. 5. Did the priests of Baal, from a principle of devotion, "cut themselves with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them," as we read, 1 Kings xviii. 28, we must ascribe that to their idolatrous folly, and foolish idolatry; but the conduct of the Romish priests, who scourge themselves with whips, stuck with pins, until they even shed their blood, that they may display their vainglorious holiness, and imaginary crucifixion of the flesh, is detestable and cruel, or suffer me rather to say, Col. ii. 23,

"it is a pretended argument of wisdom in willworship and humility, and in not sparing the body; and it is not of any advantage, but only a satisfying of the flesh."*

But how doth it come to pass, that man, who was created after the image of God, in perfect love to God and his neighbour, can be guilty of such abominations? By his apostacy from God, seduced by his father, and the murderer of man, he hath lost that pure image, and that fair love; he hath contracted a horrible and devilish disposition: "His heart is desperately wicked," Jer. xvii. 19. "The imagination of the thoughts of his heart is become only evil continually," Gen. vi. 5 He is by nature prone to hate God and his neighbour," living in malice and envy, hateful and hating others," Titus iii. 13. His lusts and his delight in vain glory, in fleshly pleasures, and in worldly profit mislead him to "wars and fightings," James iv. 1 "Out of such an evil heart proceed murders," as our Saviour testifieth, Matt. xv. 19, for it disposes a person to envy, hatred, anger and a desire of revenge, which evil emotions the instructor records as the next causes of murder.

1. In the first place "envy" is considered as such an evil root of gall and wormwood, by which a person is grieved on account of his neighbour's profit, and grudges him his advantage with a fretful mind. An abominable disposition, which censures the Lord for showing favour, and "is evil, because God is good," as Jesus speaks," Mat. xx. 15. There are few sins, in which the sinner doth not enjoy some pleasure; but envy is a malicious fury to him, of which he himself wishes to be rid; envy is also hurtful to his health, it gnaws the marrow out of his bones, and consumes his flesh; "Envy," saith Solomon, Prov. xiv. 30, "is the rottenness of the bones." Yea, this sin desires and seeks our neighbour's harm, and it is thus a cause of murder, to which the wicked person is urged through envy by the devil, "Cain," saith the apostle, 1 John iii. 12, was of that wicked one, and slew his brother: and wherefore slew he him? because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." Envy appeared so plainly in the murderous Jews, that "Pilate knew that they had delivered Jesus for envy," Mat. xxvii. 18. We may hide and shelter ourselves from "cruel wrath, and from outrageous anger: but who is able to stand before envy?" saith Solomon, Prov. xxvii. 4.

2. The other sin is "hatred," which is an aversion from our neighbour, and will not suffer him to live: the Lord God forbade

* We have rendered this passage according to the Dutch translation.

this abominable temper of old: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart," saith he, Lev. xix. 17. No marvel, for "hatred," saith Solomon, Prov. x. 12, "stirreth up strife:" yea, it urgeth the sinner to commit murder. "Esau, because he hated his brother, sought to slay him," Gen. xxvii. 41. And "Haman ordered a gallows to be made for Mordecai," whom he hated, "in order to hang him thereon," Esther v. 13, 14.

3. The third sin is "anger," by which we must not understand here a holy displeasure at sin in a person, as the Saviour had, when, being grieved on account of the hardness of the hearts of the Jews, he looked round about upon them with anger," Mark iii. 15. We may "be angry" in this manner, "and not sin," Eph. iv. 26. But the anger that is forbidden here, is that shortlived phrenzy, or evil agitation of the mind, by which a person is driven furiously on to injure his neighbour in the highest degree. This anger disturbs not only the soul, but also the whole body, the members tremble, the countenance waxes pale and wan, the hair stands erect, the mouth foams, the veins swell, the blood boils, seethes and foams, and thus wrath is "an outrageous anger and cruelty," as we have just now heard from Solomon, Prov. xxvii. 4. Anger is justly considered as the parent of murder; for "an angry man stirreth up strife," according to Prov. xv. 18. xxix. 22, and therefore commits murder also, as we may see in "Simeon and Levi, those instruments of cruelty," Gen. xlix. 5, 6, 7, and in Saul, who, when he was incensed with anger, would slay David, 1 Sam. xviii. 8—11, and in the childmurderer Herod, Mat. ii. 16. It hath often happened, that angry persons have occasioned an incurable disease to themselves by an excessive agitation of anger, and thus their death.

4. Another sin, and more heinous than anger, is forbidden here, to wit, "a desire of revenge," by which a person covets to return and recompense an injury, which he hath suffered, or imagines that he hath suffered, with an equal, yea, with a greater evil, and sometimes even with death. Thus wicked Lamech boasted in an arrogant manner of his revengeful temper, as of a noble virtue, Gen. iv. 23, 24. "Verily I have slain a man for my wounding, and a young man for my hurt: if Cain be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and seven fold." A detestable evil: a revengeful person snatches the sword of vengeance out of the hands of God, "to whom vengeance belongeth," Heb. x. 30, and places himself in his judgment-seat. Although God speaks in the sixth commandment only of murder, yet he forbids also such envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge, and accounts all these as murder: "Whosoever

hateth his brother, is a murderer," as we read, 1 John iii. 15. He who hates and condemns the fruit, will destroy also the tree with its stock and root. The reason why men do not commit actual murder oftner, is not because they are too virtuous, but because they lack the opportunity or ability, and especially because God graciously restrains them: but when a man is abandoned to himself in vexatious circumstances, and hath the power, he will soon manifest his murderous temper.

II. Man being wholly subject to God, as his sovereign Lord, cannot be indifferent in a moral sense, or neither good nor evil, but he must be either one or the other: when he forsakes evil he then doth good, and when he doth good, he then forsakes evil: "Therefore it is not enough, that we do not kill any man in the manner mentioned above; for when God forbids envy, hatred, and anger, he then commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves," &c.

1. We are commanded here in the first place "to love our neighbour as ourselves," as this is the root of other virtues; for then we shall not kill him. The cavilling Remonstrants condemn this assertion of the instructor, as if he had not inserted this virtue in its proper place, because loving our neighbour pertains to all the commandments of the second table. But there is no impropriety in speaking of this virtue here, not only because it pertains to this, as well as to the other commandments, but also because it is especially opposed to murder, and is therefore by the Lawgiver himself opposed to that sin, when he saith, Lev. xix. 18. "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

2. It followeth from this, that we must be "patient" toward our neighbour, bearing in a longsuffering manner the injury and harm that we have sustained from him, and not revenging it, but forgiving it, and thus not killing him. We must, as the apostle speaks, "be longsuffering, forbearing and forgiving one another, Col. iii. 12, 13. This is indeed the nature of love, which is longsuffering, is not easily provoked, beareth and endureth all things," according to 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5, 7.

3. When a person pursues love, he will overtake "peace" also, and maintain it with his neighbour, and thus prevent all strife and discord, and therefore also murder. Applicable are here the words of the apostle, Rom. xii, "If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, live peaceably with all men. Blessed are the peacemakers," saith the great Prince of peace, Matt v. 9.

4. Those who love others are also "meek," for they do not start up in sudden anger, when they are injured, endeavouring to render their neighbour evil for evil, but they remain soft and tractable, like the most pliable substances. We see this virtue in Moses above other men, Numb. xii. 2. But the unsinning Saviour excelled him, and he requires that all men should "learn of him to be meek," Matt. xi. 29.

5 Love excites a person to "mercy," by which he regards his neighbour's distress as his own, and endeavours, as if he suffered with him, to assist and deliver him, and hereby he is without difficulty preserved from envy, cruelty and murder. Thus he "puts on bowels of mercy," as Paul adviseth, Col. iii. 12. The tenderhearted Saviour was repeatedly moved with inward motions of mercy toward the miserable, and he pronounced "the merciful blessed; for they should obtain mercy," Matt. v. 7.

6. When love burns in the heart, the flames thereof will appear abroad in "kindness," by which a person conducts affectionately and courteously in his gestures, words, and in all his behaviour toward his neighbours, and whereby he restrains his neighbour's envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge. Peter requires that we should not only "love as brethren, but also be courteous," 1 Peter. iii. 8.

7. A person who is so friendly, "will also, as much as in him lieth, prevent the hurt of his neighbour," In consequence of an injury, which affects the property, honour, or body of our neighbour, his life may be in imminent danger; if we love him then, we will endeavour to deliver him, when he is seized, in order that he may be put to death; for he is in danger of being slain, if we forbear," Prov. xxiv. 11.

8. Love appears still more generous, when a person "doth good to his enemies" With respect to public enemies, disturbers of the commonwealth, who endeavour to deprive us of the opportunity to do them good, we ought to hinder, resist, and annoy them, as much as we can, agreeably to the love, which we owe to ourselves and to our fellowcitizens above those enemies. But with respect to private and personal enemies, we ought, according to the nature of love, to do them good, as the Samaritan did good to the wounded Jew, who was his enemy, Luke x. 30—35 This the Saviour commands, Matt. v. 44. and Paul urgeth it also, Rom. xii. 20. and Solomon, the forefather of the Saviour had enjoined it before, Prov. xxv. 21, 22.

APPLICATION.

That Christ did as a new Lawgiver, add to this commandment, "that we must not be angry with our brother, nor address him with bitter language, nor revenge an injury, no not by the interference of the magistrate," this is the language of the Socinians, and it is contrary to the word of God, which teaches us that all anger, all reviling, and desire of revenge was forbidden under the old testament; see only Lev. xix. 18. which we have cited before; and therefore the commandment of Jesus, that we may not be angry with our brother without cause, is not a new law, but a repetition and an illustration of an old law, which the ancient Pharisees had obscured, Matt. v. 22, 39.

What is your opinion now, hearers, concerning the church of Rome, which weens that she hath done God service by destroying so many kings and princes, and so many other men, on account of the profession of the truth. No man was formerly sure of his life; whoever spake but the least word against that impure whore, was presently seized and condemned to be put to death, either by the sword, or the halter, or by drowning, yea, such a death was deemed too mild, they burned such persons alive, and buried them in the earth alive. Yea, the Papists have endeavoured to lay waste and murder whole countries, which were infested with what they called the northern heresy: let Piedmont, France, Ireland and Holland declare. Can such a religion be conformable to the word of God, and acceptable to God, which establisheth itself in the blood of the innocent? surely no: all this bloodshedding is the mark of "the great whore, who is drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus," according to Rev. xvii. 7. The Lord God hath also revenged it by abridging Antichrist, and by punishing him with spiritual and temporal judgments, and "giving him blood to drink, since he hath shed the blood of saints and prophets" as John prophesieth, Rev. xvi. 6 And we need not doubt that the Lord God will punish it more adequately at some future period, by a total devastation of the spiritual Babylon, because "in her is found the blood of the prophets, and of all who were slain on the earth." See Rev. xviii. 1—24.

But that which chiefly concerns you at present, hearers, is whether all of you have kept this commandment in all its parts. It was your duty to keep it, for ye are directly subject to the exalted Lawgiver, he proclaims to you amidst the dreadful thunderings, and fearful

lightnings from heaven, "Ye shall not kill." Have ye not kept the commandment, ye are condemned to die, and "accursed, because ye have not continued in all things written in the book of the law, to do them," agreeably to what Paul teacheth us, Gal. iii. 10, from Deut. xxvii. 26. I have no reason to think that any of you hath killed his neighbour, either secretly or openly; but are ye therefore clear of bloodguiltiness? No: we kill our neighbour by malicious thoughts, by bitter words, and surly gestures, by dishonouring him, by envy, hatred, anger, and a desire of revenge; yea, we violate this commandment by a want of love to our neighbour, by passionateness, strife, harshness, unmercifulness, surliness, and sullenness toward our neighbour, and also when we do not maintain love and its good fruits. Compare yourselves with this picture, view yourselves in this mirror, and see whether ye do not behold your proper figure, and perceive your murderous heart in it. Or are ye utter strangers to these malignant motions? and do ye think that ye are goodnatured? but when? when ye are alone, and have no opportunity to discover your sullenness? Yea, will ye not even then stir up your malignity against this or that person, who ye think, hath injured you, or might injure you? Are there not many strangers and relations, husband, wife, children, parents, who are not to your mind, or who are a burthen to you, whom ye secretly wish God would take away? and how do ye behave toward persons, with whom ye must converse at home and elsewhere? do ye not vex them time after time with your difficult temper, austere looks, and spiteful words? And if others look at you, and speak to you in an unkind manner, or do aught that is not to your mind, or vex and wrong you, are ye able to endure all with patience and meekness, and to answer it with kindness? do ye say yea; I ask you then also, what it is that moves you to this? is it the fear of God? is "destruction from God a terrour to you, and are ye unable to endure by reason of his highness?" as that patient man speaks, Job xxxi. 23, or is it because ye are of an abject and cowardly spirit? or because men would despise you, if ye showed your moody disposition? or because your adversary is your superiour; or is at least as keen as ye are yourselves, and thus one knife, as we say, keeps the other in its sheath? I ask all this, that I may, if it be possible, bring you to yourselves, and cause you to see the abominableness of your hearts. Are ye so exceedingly filled with selflove, that ye cannot look to the bottom of your hearts, and therefore cannot think any evil of yourselves; hear then what the Lord God, who "searcheth your heart which is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, so

that none can know it," Jer. xvii. 9, 10, hear, I say, what he testifieth of Jews and Gentiles, and thus of all men, and therefore of you also, Rom. iii. 13—18. "Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes." Behold, this is your character, whether ye know it or not; and when God shall set these things in order before your eyes, then will ye see it.

Do not however reckon it enough to know that ye are exceedingly sinful and abominable, but observe also what a recompence the Lord God hath appointed for such wickedness, and apply it to yourselves, that ye may know also that it is an evil and bitter thing to forsake the Lord, and that his fear is not in you. I will proclaim the word of God to you, which saith, Deut. xxvii. 42, "Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbour secretly; and all the people shall say Amen." Among "the six things which the Lord hateth, and the seven which are an abomination to his soul, are also hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, and feet that be swift in running to mischief," Prov. vi. 16—18. "Murderers shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," according to Rev. xxi. 8. Or is it your thought, that ye need not regard this, because ye have not killed any man? but is not a heart which deviseth wicked imaginations numbered among the seven abominations? "Whoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him," according to the words of the apostle, 1 John iii. 15. Paul saith, Rom. iii. 19, "We know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God," and he applies this to all the abominations of which he had spoken, vrs. 13—18, and of which we have convinced you, as that your "throat is an open sepulchre," &c. Behold this, and be concerned, and distressed, that ye may not find any longer the life of your hands, although ye should be afflicted and ready to die; for this would cause you to flee from the wrath to come, and from the second death.

Do any of you seek to be delivered from bloodguiltiness, and do ye not know what to do, hear then, ye who mourn and weep on account of your vileness, and your condemnation, I have a good word to you, and O that it might possess your souls, so that it would pre-

sent you blameless before your Judge. It is this, God hath appointed his Son a surety for persons who were worthy of death, he engaged to his Father that he would become a surety, and he actually fulfilled the suretiship, when from love, and "through zeal for the house of God," he suffered himself to be "consumed, and gave himself an offering, and a sacrifice to God, for a sweetsmelling savour," according to Psalm lxix. 9. Eph. v. 2. Because he stood in the stead of persons who deserved to die, therefore he, who was the Prince of life, was put to death, "he was delivered and died for our offences, according to the scriptures," as we read, Rom. iv. 25. 1 Cor. xv. 3. I would not have you all however to dismiss forthwith your concern on this account, as though he died for all men, we know better: but I would that ye should seek to win Christ, and thus to partake of his death, that his death may be reckoned yours, and for you. Know then that he proffers himself, his death, and thereby life to and for you; for, "having abolished death, he hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel," according to the doctrine of Paul, 2 Tim. i. 10. Touch then that evangelical sceptre of his, consent to his proffer, "take hold of him, who is the strengh of God, and make your peace with the Lord, and be reconciled to God," as ye are counselled and entreated to do, Isaiah xxvii 5. 2 Cor. v 20. Yea, flee to him, as a most secure city of refuge, like the murderer, Luke xxiii. 42, 45. "The name of the Lord is indeed a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe," according to Prov. xviii. 10. O rest not, until ye have really and actually become partakers of his death, and are thereby reconciled to God.

"With thee there is forgiveness, that thou mayest be feared," saith David to the Lord, Psalm cxxx. 4. Let him then, who hath obtained forgiveness, and to whom life hath been granted, endeavour to be delivered from his deadly disposition, which suggests murders: we must "put off wrath, anger, malice and evilspeaking," as the apostle admonisheth. Though we be ever so much wronged and harmed, we must not retain any anger, nor desire of revenge. We all pray to God, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us;" shall we not then be ready to forgive? what evidence can we have, that our sins are forgiven, if we retain displeasure against our neighbour? Consider, ye justified persons, how often, and how grievously ye have provoked the Lord, and with how much patience he hath endured your sins, and how freely he hath forgiven them; yea, that he would rather punish them in his dear Son, than in you; will not ye then, whom God hath forgiven

ten thousand talents, forgive your fellowservant a hundred pence? See Matt. xviii. 24—35. I therefore exhort you with Paul from Eph. iv. 31, 32. v. 1, 2 "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evilspeaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind, one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour." See this same exhortation, Col. iii. 12—14. These sins ought certainly to be pursued with a deadly hatred, and to be slain; for they are murderers of your souls, yea, they killed the Prince of life; therefore nail them to his cross, that it may appear that ye belong to Christ; for "such have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts," Gal. v. 24. We may not kill any man, because he is our neighbour, but we must kill our old man, who is nearer to us than our neighbour.

Ought we to conduct in this manner toward our neighbour, we ought then much more to take care of our own lives. We have obtained our lives of the Lord, as a precious treasure; we ought then to take care of them, and to preserve them for him, and for his service. It becomes us therefore not only to beware of rashness, and of all iniquity, by which our lives are endangered, but also to be industrious according to the will of God, in order that we may provide ourselves by all lawful means with whatever is necessary to sustain our lives. Hear and practise what Paul saith, 2 Thess. iii. 10—12, "When we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any man would not work, neither should he eat; for we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such, we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread." Are we not in health, but sick, we should then make use of medicines for our recovery, for the Lord hath appointed them for healing: we ought not then to be averse from them, but to make use of them according to his will. When the Lord would prolong the life of Hezekiah, who was visited with a deadly disease, fifteen years, he commanded that "they should lay a plaister upon the bile." Isaiah xxxviii. 21. Depend not however for the preservation of your lives on your own care, nor on these outward means, but only on the Lord, living from his hand: it was a blot on the religious character of Asa, that "he sought not to the Lord in his sickness, but to the physicians," 2 Chron. xvi. 12. "He who either suffers," or is in danger of losing his life in this, or in

any other way, according to the will of God, must commit his soul in welldoing to the faithful Creator," as Peter admonisheth, 1 Pet. iv. 19. And are we in want of daily food and clothing, let us not be too much discouraged: God, our father, our life, and the length of our days, who giveth us life, who feeds the fowls, who clothes and adorns the grass of the field, will provide us with both food and raiment, as the mouth of truth teacheth, Matt. vi. 25—34. It is true, believers, ye also must die; but ye will die, that ye may become heirs of life, and may be settled there, where "there will not be any more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain," Rev. xxi. 4, for, as Paul hath foretold, "corruption will put on incorruption, and mortal will put on immortality." Amen.

THE

SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

EXPLAINED.

XLI. LORD'S DAY.

Exod. xx. 4. "Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Q. 108. *What doth the seventh commandment teach us?*

A. That all uncleanness is accursed of God, and that therefore we must with all our hearts detest the same, and live chastely and temperately, whether in holy wedlock, or in a single state.

Q. 109. *Doth God forbid in this command only adultery, and such-like gross sins?*

A. Since both body and soul are temples of the Holy Ghost, he commands us to preserve them pure and holy; therefore he forbids all unchaste actions, gestures, words, thoughts, desires, and whatever can entice men thereto.

OF the various kinds of love, with which men cleave, and are united to one another, the conjugal love of two persons, who are connected in wedlock, is the strongest, and the most agreeable. Is there indeed a stronger love, than that which the Son of God beareth to his church, as his bride and wife, and which she ought to bear to

him, as her bridegroom and husband? but this love is proposed to persons connected in wedlock, as a pattern for their imitation. See Eph. v. 23—33. Exceedingly strong was the love of Jonathan to David, 1 Sam. xviii. 1. "His soul was knit with the soul of David, and he loved him as his own soul." But wedded love ought to exceed even that. David saith indeed in his song of lamentation for the death of Jonathan, 2 Sam. i. 26, "My brother Jonathan, very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." But he doth not say that the love of Jonathan was greater than that of women, but that he was better pleased with Jonathan's love to him, than with the love of his wives. The law commands a man to love his neighbour "as himself," but by his conjugal love, a man loves his consort not only as himself, but he even loves himself in her; for as the apostle saith, Eph. v. 28, "He that loveth his wife loveth himself." Are human beings obliged to love one another heartily; then children are obliged to love their parents so; but the husband is still more bound to love his wife so. The Lord God therefore created the woman for the man, as his other self, yea, of his flesh, and of his bone, and enjoined on him to "leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife, and to be with her one flesh." Therefore he also forbids us to dissolve this love and wedlock, when he proclaims to every one from heaven, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

The Lawgiver had indeed enjoined in the fifth commandment, that children should honour their parents, and in the sixth commandment, that men should love their neighbour as themselves, and therefore preserve his life; but he provides particularly in the seventh commandment for the inviolate preservation of conjugal love and of wedlock.

If it be true concerning any sin, that "taking occasion by the commandment, it worketh all manner of concupiscence" in the sinner, as Paul speaks, Rom. vii. 8, it is true concerning this sin: we may nevertheless not forbear to speak of it; for this sin must be "manifested to be sin, working death" to the sinner "by that which is good," as the same holy man speaks, Rom. vii. 13. Let therefore the fear of the Lord fall on you, and let his excellency make you afraid, while we set this sin before you.

I. With respect to its head,

II. With respect to its members,

III. With respect to its soul.

I. The headsin is called in the text *naaph*, "breaking wedlock, but in Deut. v. 18, that Hebrew word is rendered "committing

adultery," which breaks wedlock. It is clear, that the Lord doth not speak here of that spiritual adultery, which Israel and Judah, who were married to the Lord, "committed with wood and stone," as he complains, Jer. iii. 6—9, but he hath respect here to a proper and corporal wedlock-breaking and adultery.

Wedlock, which is broken by adultery, is the state of marriage, in which one man is united to one woman, as one flesh, for their mutual assistance, and the propagation of the human race. This union by wedlock cannot and ought not to be effected by force; but it is contracted by a mutual consent, and covenanting, and it is confirmed, as it were, by an oath of the Lord: and thus "the Lord is a witness between a man and the wife of his youth," according to what we read, Mal. ii. 14. Although the solemn and public confirmation, whether by the magistrate, or by the church, doth not constitute marriage, it is nevertheless necessary, that all may know whose husband and wife a person is, and that the children are not bastards, but the offspring of a lawful marriage.

The instructor calls the married state with propriety holy: it was instituted by a holy God: it is also contracted and confirmed in the presence of the Lord, as a witness, with calling upon his name, and it serves for a holy purpose, even to propagate a seed for God: this hath place especially in the marriage of godly persons, who have the promises for them and their seed. See Mal. ii. 15. Gen. xvii. 7. But although wedlock is so holy, every person is not therefore obliged to enter into it: the Lord hath left marriage to the free choice of men; when a person marries, he doth not sin, and when he forbears to marry, the Lord will not take it ill of him. He who can contain, and doth not need a help, and foresees an approaching calamity, doth best when he forbears to marry: but he who hath not the gift of continence, will do better, if he marry, that he may avoid shameful desires and fornication. These are the rules which the apostle prescribes with respect to marriage, 1 Cor. vii. But how shall we understand the conduct of the Papists, who consider marriage as a sacrament, and nevertheless do not permit their pretended spiritual persons, their churchmen, to marry; yea, these vain men have such an aversion from marriage, that they reckon it better to retain a mistress, or harlot, than to have a lawful wife. But how! is marriage a holy sacrament, and yet so detestable, that they who marry are "in the flesh and cannot please God," as these men abuse the words of Paul? Rom. viii. 8. "Marriage is honourable in all and the bed undefiled," Heb. xiii. 4. Why is it then prohibited to persons, who would be honourable, and why

are they rather permitted to keep a dishonourable mistress? But why need we wonder at this? Hath not "the Spirit said expressly, that in the latter times some should depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils, forbidding to marry?" 1 Tim. v. 1, 3.

Although we have all of us a right to marry, we may nevertheless not commit incest, which we do, when we marry with a person who is too near akin to us: the Lord hath strictly forbidden this. The Canaanites defiled their land so by incest, that it vomited them out, as the Lawgiver saith, and he hath also precisely defined the kindred who may not converse carnally with one another, Lev. xviii. It is an abominable conduct of the Pope, that he presumes, as above, and in opposition to the law of God, to allow a dispensation to marry kindred, in certain cases, and he manifests thus that he is "that wicked one, that man of sin, that son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped (as God) so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God," as Paul hath foretold, 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4, 8. He exalteth himself indeed above the high God, when he dissolves his laws, and enacts others instead of them, by constituting a spiritual affinity between godfathers and godmothers, so that they may not marry each other, although they be not even the most distant kindred, and he "binds thus heavy burthens, and grievous to be borne, and lays them upon men's shoulders," as the Saviour saith of the Pharisees, Matt. xxiii. 4. "We may not add to the law of God, neither may we diminish aught from it," according to Deut. iv. 2. We are therefore at liberty to marry with any one whom we please, provided he be not our kinsman. The children of Adam were obliged to marry each other; but this law, which forbids incest, could not oblige at that time. God had indeed commanded, that when the elder brother died without children, the younger should marry his widow, and raise up seed to his brother: but this was a dispensation of the law of incest for that time, agreeably to God's absolute sovereignty, in order to maintain the name and privileges of the firstborn among the Israelites. No man may believe that he hath a right in the free state of the New Testament church to enter into marriage with his kindred, as if the law of incest were now abolished with the ceremonial, or churchlaws of Israel: for the law which forbids incest, obliged the heathens also, who were cast out of the land of Canaan, on account of their abominable mixtures: therefore Paul, who was so zealous against introducing the ceremonial

law into the Christian church, would not suffer the incestuous person, who had his father's wife, in the church, 1 Cor. x. 1—13.

"Think before you begin," saith the proverb. "With the well-advised there is wisdom," saith the wise king, Prov. xiii. 10. He who will marry must oblige himself for life; he may not repent afterward, and dissolve his marriage; for he is become with his wife one flesh, which he may not rend. This is nevertheless done too often by a faithless desertion of one another, or by adultery. It is a dissolving of marriage, and acting contrary to the first institution of it, when a man separates from his wife, or a wife from her husband. Hear what the Saviour saith, Matt. xix. 4—6, from Gen. ii. 21—24, "Have ye not read, that he which made them from the beginning, made them male and female? and said, for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Therefore although the man or woman should be wicked, or a heathen, and not guilty of adultery, we may not separate. Are we faithlessly deserted, we must bear it patiently, if we cannot effect a reconciliation: but let not a person, who is deserted in this manner, marry again, which the Lord forbids by Paul, 1 Cor. vii. 10—16. "He committeth adultery," saith the Lord, Matt. xix. 9, "who marrieth her that is put away, except for adultery." See also the apostle's words, Rom. vii. 1—3* As it is abominable to desert a wife faithlessly, so it is unlawful for a man and his wife to agree upon a separation, though one party should give more occasion to it than another, and should compel his consort to a separation; for both render themselves thus guilty of breaking wedlock. We must also look upon those to be guilty of breaking wedlock, who have engaged to be married, and afterwards rashly discharge each other, although their marriage have not been publickly confirmed; for the publick ceremony doth not

* This is to be understood so, that a person may not marry again, when he is faithlessly deserted, unless his consort proceed to carnal conversation with another person; for that, although committed during a state of separation, must be considered as adultery, which is the only offence that can ordinarily sunder married persons, and entitle the injured party in any situation to marry again. The word of God also permits a Christian, who is faithlessly deserted on account of his religion by a consort who is an unbeliever, to marry again, if he cannot by any proper means persuade his consort to live with him, 1 Cor. vii. 15, as it also forbids a Christian to marry an unbeliever. By an unbeliever we may reasonably understand in the passage alleged not only a heathen, but also any person, who either rejects the Christian faith, or denies the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

constitute marriage, but the mutual engagement: "Moses indeed suffered the Jews to give their wives a bill of divorcement, and to put them away; but this was only on account of the hardness of their hearts; for from the beginning it was not so," as the Saviour saith, Matt. xix. 7, 8. The Jews who were a difficult people, acted with so much lightness in this affair, that they gave their wives a bill of divorcement, and put them away for every cause, and even for a trifle: Moses did not however permit this, but only, when the woman "found no favour in the eyes of her husband, because he had discovered some uncleanness in her," as we read Deut. xxiv. 1.

But a person renders himself guilty of breaking wedlock, not only by separating, but also when he remains with his wife, and yet defiles himself with adultery; which adultery, as some describe it, is "a violation of another's bed:" and so this sin is committed, not only when a married, but also when an unmarried person converseth carnally with another's consort. But I conceive that adultery consists also in violating any person's marriage-bed, and is therefore committed also by married persons with the unmarried; for the Saviour saith, Matt. xix. 9, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another," and therefore an unmarried woman, "committeth adultery." This abomination may also be committed by persons who are betrothed to each other, although they have not yet been confirmed in wedlock, as "Israel's brides* committed adultery," Hosea, iv. 14.

We must refer also to this abomination having more than one wife at the same time. A man may be the husband of only one wife, which is required especially in "a bishop, that he may be blameless," 1 Tim. iii. 2. To have more than one at the same time militates against the first marriage, and the first institution of marriage. The last prophet hath also an eye to this, when, reproving the Jews for their polygamy, he saith, Mal. ii. 15, "Did he not make one? yet had he the residue of the Spirit: and wherefore one? that he might seek a godly seed." As if he should say, that God had created but one man, and out of him but one woman, although he could have made more: but one man with one woman was sufficient to propagate a holy seed. Unless we would rather understand by that one person, Abraham, who took besides Sarah, Hagar also, that he might obtain the promised seed by her, and this was therefore in some measure excusable in him, as he did not do it from wicked lewdness, nor to afflict Sarah: and therefore Abraham's conduct could not justify the Jews' desire of many wives, as

* This is agreeable to the Dutch translation.

they imagined. Even "the king of Israel might not take many wives," according to the divine prescript to him, Deut. xvii. 17, and no man ventured to do that, before that proud and revengeful Lamech, Gen. iv. 19. Is a man obligated to love his wife as his own flesh, how is that possible, when he hath many wives, and thus divides his love? The jealousy and domestic quarrels, which arose from a plurality of wives, in the families of the patriarchs, demonstrates the inconvenience of this conduct. It is true, God suffered it in them, and did not punish it severely; but neither did he visit other sins of those holy persons severely: yet he did not therefore approve of them, neither are they to be imitated: it was then, as Paul saith, Rom. iii. 25, the time of "God's forbearance," and the church was then yet in her state of childhood, which inclined God to wink at many things.

II. As the head of this sin is, so also are the members; for we sin against this commandment, not only in the married state, but also, (though not so grievously) when we commit the same deeds out of the married state, to wit, when two unmarried persons abuse one another by fornication. The adultery of a married woman, on account of which she may be put away, is also called fornication by Jesus, Matt. xix. 9. But it is usually distinguished from adultery. The "spouses" among the people of God "committed adultery," but "the daughters committed whoredom," (or fornication,) Hosea iv. 14. It is a vile conduct to keep a mistress; but it is also exceedingly base, when the fornicator converseth with every one, who will submit to be abused by him. Neither is it excusable, that persons, who have been betrothed to one another, have carnal communication one with another before their marriage hath been rendered lawful, according to the law of the land; if this be proper, why then do we suffer our marriage to be confirmed by the magistrates, or the church? it is true, this is only a human institution, but we ought to be subject to that also for the Lord's sake, as Peter requires, 1 Peter ii. 13. If the betrothed bride should become pregnant, and should lose her bridegroom by death, before her marriage was consummated, how would the children be considered by the civil law, as legitimate, or illegitimate? Holy persons, like Joseph and Mary, abstained from such conduct: although they were betrothed, they came not presently together, Matt. i. 18.

And men sin against this commandment also very grievously both in and out of the married state,

1. By stealing women, carrying either unmarried, or married women away, with, or against their mind, in order to defile them. We

may consider this as a kind of manstealing, for which the Lord appointed the punishment of death, Exod. xxi. 16. The magistrates have also watched of old against this misconduct, by annexing the same punishment to it. To this we must also refer the behaviour of young men, in stealing the affections of young women, and rendering them pregnant without the knowledge of their parents, that they may compel the parents to consent to the marriage of their children, as Shechem defiled Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, for which both he and his father with all his fellowcitizens suffered very grievously, Gen. xxxiv. The parents are however not obliged to give their daughter to such a dishonest person, and they may compel him to satisfy for his crime, according to the law of Moses, Exod. xxii. 17.

2. It is a still greater sin to force women and maids, or to overpower them by violence, that we may commit abomination with them. God appointed no less a penalty for this sin than death, Deut. xxii. 25. Amnon, after he had forced his sister Tamar, was slain by Absalom, not without the righteous avenging providence of God, 2 Sam. xiii.

3. The sin of the Sodomites, which was punished by God with fire from heaven, Gen. xix. This unnatural and more than beastly sin we will not mention, it is justly called the dumb sin.

The sins of adultery and fornication are exceedingly wicked and detestable in whatever situation they are committed. They are abominable in themselves, and men dare not speak of them: "It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret," Eph. v. 12. There is no sin that disgraceth a person more than adultery and fornication; "He who is joined to a harlot is one body with her: every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body," according to 1 Cor. vi. 16, 18. This sin transforms a man into a beast, and makes him "like a fed horse," Jer. v. 8, yea, it disgraces the generation of them, who defile themselves with it; the Lord required that "the daughter of the priest, who played the whore, should be burned with fire, because she had profaned her father," Lev. xxi. 9.

Add to this, that these iniquities are attended with many evil consequences. The adulterer dissolves marriage, and withal the strictest bond of the most agreeable love and friendship, that ought to subsist between married persons. Fornication, as well as adultery, consumes our estate: "By means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread," saith Solomon, Prov. vi. 26, and "he

that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance," Prov. xxix. 3. What an evil thing must that sin be, which deprives a person of his natural and becoming modesty, so that "he shall have a whore's forehead, and refuse to be ashamed." Jer. iii. 3. Hath not this filthy sin deprived many of their health by loathsome diseases, and caused them to die painful deaths, so that "they have mourned at the last, when their flesh and their body were consumed?" as Solomon saith, Prov. v. 11, Yea, have not these abominations occasioned murders and massacres? The Shechemites and Amnon were slain on account of this sin, Gen. xxxiv. 2 Sam. xiii.

We must add further, that this sin is accursed of God: God suffers not any man to be guilty of it, with whom he is not displeased: "The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit, he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein," saith the wise man, Prov. xxii. 14. God inflicts dreadful judgments upon adulterers, though they may be in other respects his favourites: what fearful plagues befell the house of David on account of this transgression! read from the twelfth to the twentieth chapter of second Samuel. God required that adultery should be punished with death, Lev. xx. 10. He shuts impenitent adulterers and fornicators out of his heavenly kingdom, and he hath kindled the bottomless and unquenchable lake for them, 1 Cor. vi. 10. Rev. xxi. 8. xxii. 15.

III. "Doth God forbid only adultery, and such like gross sins?" No, for since "he requireth that we should preserve both body and soul holy," he forbids likewise,

1. "All unchaste actions," as all impure kisses, dallying, flattering and alluring, such as the harlot, whom Solomon describes, used with the young man, void of understanding, Prov. vii. 7—23. The sin of Onan is therefore also forbidden here.

2. Unchaste "gestures" with our eyes, hands or feet are also to be avoided: "A naughty person winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, and he teacheth with his fingers," Prov. vi. 12, 13. "Having the eyes full of adultery" is a work of the flesh, as Peter teacheth, 2 Peter ii. 14 The wise king therefore justly admonisheth his son, Prov. vi. 25, "Not to lust after the beauty of a strange woman in his heart, and not to let her take him with her eyelids."

3. If there be aught that discovers the lewdness of a person, and kindles it in others, it is unchaste "words," tales, songs, "filthy communications," Eph. iv. 29. Col. iii. 8, "filthiness, foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient," Eph. v. 4. We may

apply here also the words of Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 33, "Evil communications corrupt good manners."

4. Unchaste "thoughts," either waking or sleeping, are not excusable neither: the heart ought to be pure, but it is exceedingly filthy; for "out of it proceed evil thoughts, and thus also adulteries and fornications" as the mouth of truth speaketh, Matt. xv. 19. He teaches also, Matt. v. 28, "If any look at a woman to lust after her, he hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

5 "And whatsoever can entice men to adultery and fornication" is forbidden here. Many things entice men thereto, as (a) sloth and idleness: the heart hath leisure and opportunity then to work up "all its filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness," and the devil finds room also to tempt us, and to employ us with lascivious injections. David was seduced to this sin, when he walked liesurely on his roof, 2 Sam. xi. 2. (b) The excessive use of luscious meats and of delicious drinks will also seduce a person to this sin: "Be not amongst winebibbers, amongst riotous eaters of flesh; thine eye shall behold strange women," saith the wisest of kings, Prov. xxiii. 20, 33. (c) Curiosity to hear and to see every thing entices also very frequently to this abomination. Dinah, by going out to see the daughters of the land, exposed herself to the violence of Shechem, Gen. xxxiv. 1, 2. (d) Unchaste portraits and pictures will also excite the mind to lewdness. Aholibah became enamoured of the young men of Chaldea by looking at their portraits, Ezek. xxiii. 14—17. (e) The idle dress of worldly women, and the uncovering of those members which modesty bids us to conceal, are not less powerful allurements. This nevertheless prevails exceedingly at present, as if we could not sin with our garments; but what was "the whorish attire" of that wanton woman? Prov. vii. 10. was it aught else but ribbands, and laces, and gauderies of every kind? We see this sort of dress described in the attire of the daughters of Zion, Isaiah iii. 16—23. The Lord saith, Zeph. i. 8, that "he will punish the children of the king, and all such as were clothed with strange apparel." It was the wicked "Jezabel, who painted herself," 2 Kings ix. 30. The admonition of Paul is surely proper in our time, 1 Tim. ii. 9. "Let the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety: not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array." See also Titus iii. 3, 4. It is true a person may clothe himself according to his station, but he who is not vain will conform himself rather to the humblest of his condition, than to those who desire to excel their equals in their attire. But "it is abominable in the sight of the Lord, for

a man to wear a garment which pertains to a woman, or a woman a garment which pertains to a man," as the Lord himself saith, Deut. xxii 5. (f) Dancing, comedies and stageplays entice men also to this sin, as they know best who entertain themselves with these vanities. I do not believe that any person will say, that he ever came from the dancingroom, or from a stageplay a better man than he was before; at least, he will not persuade any serious and soberminded person that he did. Doth not dancing, seeing and hearing so many unchaste shows heat and inflame the blood and spirits? but the giddy sinner doth not attend to himself, and is so besotted with these vanities, that he will keep his foul heart hid, lest it should affect both himself and others.

APPLICATION.

When we consider all these sins, which are forbidden in this commandment, and which were therefore forbidden also under the Old Testament, as we have shown from many passages of the scriptures of the Old Testament, may we then, hearers, think with the Socinians, that this commandment is not perfect, but that it was enlarged by Christ with a prohibition, (1) that we should abstain not only from actual whoredom, but also from whoredom with the desires of the heart. (2) With a declaration that "he who putteth away his wife, except for fornication, committeth adultery, and that he who marrieth her who is put away, doth commit adultery." (3) With a prohibition of all uncleanness, and lascivious discourse, as if all these things were allowable under the Old Testament, and God did not then require an exact holiness of soul and body, and as if even the heathens did not disapprove of these sins; but it was necessary that the Socinians should reproach the dispensation of Moses, yea, of the Lord in this manner, if they would maintain that Christ preached a new doctrine.

But who is not averse from the church of Rome, who doth not only forbid her ministers to marry, and doth not only permit them to keep a mistress, but also considers whoredom as a venial, and not as a mortal sin, yea, even licenses whores at Rome, if they will only pay a julio weekly, to make the portion of the pope fat, and his meat plenteous. And what is still more enormous in that church, men have dared in her to justify the sin of the Sodomites in a book

printed with an exclusive license. It is not therefore to be wondered at that that church is so frequently called "the whore, the great whore, who corrupted the earth with her fornication," Rev. xvii. 1, 2, 15, 16. xix. 2. We ought to justify our fathers in forsaking that unclean woman, and in giving her a bill of divorcement: we will nevermore return to her again.

Alas! that Holland, delivered from the yoke of Rome, were only innocent. But how guilty doth she render herself! This iniquity is committed in secret: but the Lord seeth it, and it is evil in his eyes: and how often doth it become publick, that this and that person hath defiled himself with adultery and fornication! the bastards, and the filthy sicknesses discover it but too frequently. And how many are there whose transgression is not yet known! But why need I fight at random? come to yourselves, both married and unmarried persons, and see whether ye have never been seduced to these abominations. I believe there are many honest persons among you, who have never defiled themselves with whoredom: but do ye think that ye can therefore take your hands out of your bosoms, and that they will not be leprous, and that ye are clean with respect to this vice? are ye not conscious of any unchaste actions? do ye say, yea? are ye then altogether strangers to unchaste gestures and words? are ye strangers to these also? how is it with your hearts and thoughts, and particularly with respect to all those things, that might entice you to this transgression? do ye think that ye are pure in this respect also? I believe that ye are not yet acquainted with your hearts, and that ye do not know what sin is. Do ye see your detestable heart and actions, see then also that ye are under the curse; for all uncleanness is accursed of God, and he threatens and punisheth it severely, that ye may become contrite, and may humble yourselves on account of it, and be earnestly desirous of obtaining pardon and reconciliation for it. Think not, it is long since, for it is not therefore forgiven. God doth neither forgive nor forget this sin, until men sincerely humble and abase themselves on account of it. Or do ye think that God will not take this enormity so exceedingly ill of you, because David, the man after God's heart was guilty of it, and nevertheless obtained forgiveness? But is your sin therefore the less, because a holy man was seduced to it? doth it not rather aggravate your sin, that ye do not watch against it now, when ye have such a melancholic example before your eyes, which ought to restrain you from it the more? Did not God punish that sin of David with particular severity? Because another cast himself into the fire and water, and was delivered out of it, do ye think that

ye, who run after him into such a destructive evil, will also be delivered? David sinned in a most grievous manner, but he also humbled himself to the lowest degree on account of his sin, and sought reconciliation with God earnestly and heartily: do ye so likewise, that ye may obtain mercy and help. Yea, believers, although they have obtained peace and reconciliation with the Lord for this sin, should yet pause a while by it, should humble themselves, and seek a renewal of their peace with the Lord, like David, Psalm li. after Nathan had informed him, that the Lord had taken away his sin, 2 Sam. xii. 13.

Are ye troubled and concerned on account of the impurity of your hearts and actions, flee then to the pure Jesus, who suffered the punishment of these sins also for his elect, that they might obtain peace, and be healed with his stripes. David did so, when he said, Psalm li. 7, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." This iniquity will sometimes oppress the soul exceedingly, and be continually before her; yea, it will sometimes burthen the heart so, that there will remain but little hope of pardon in the mind. But let such afflicted and tempesttossed persons know that the Mediator poured out his soul, and prayed for great sins also. Did not David and Lot obtain pardon for these sins, though they were aggravated to the highest degree? "Some" of the Corinthians "had been adulterers and effeminate," yea, still more atrocious sinners; but joining themselves to the saviour by faith and conversion, "they were washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," as Paul testifieth, 1 Cor. vi. 10, 11. I speak not thus to encourage any unclean person in this abomination, but to persuade and induce the distressed to flee to the Son of God, and to wash their souls "in the fountain" of his blood, "opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin, and for uncleanness," Zech. xiii. 1.

Let every one beware of this abomination, yea, of the least provocation and temptation to this sin, and let him show himself chaste and continent, that is, modest, shamefaced, and unfriendly to the least and first motion of this sin, both in and out of the married state: (a) "For the eyes of God are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where all the workers of iniquity may hide themselves," saith Elihu, Job xxxiv. 21, 22. This withheld the chaste Joseph from adultery with his master's wife, who tempted him thereto, Gen. xxxix. 9. (b) Know also believers, that "your members are the members of

Christ, that your bodies and souls are the temples of the Holy Ghost," sanctified and bought with the precious blood of the Son of God; therefore such filthy sins ought not to be entertained in them, yea, not even the motions of those sins. This the apostle teacheth the Corinthians, who were purified from this impurity, 1 Cor. vi. 10, 11, 15, 20. (c) Let the commandment of God, with whom we have to do, affect your souls so, as to render you averse from this sin. He proclaims to you from heaven amidst a display of his exalted majesty, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Who will then dare to excite the least motion of this sin in his soul? "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication; that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour: not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles, which know not God." Thus speaks Paul, 1 Thes. iv. 3, 4, 5. (d) It happens to some, yea, to believers also, that they are disturbed with powerful motions of these sins: an unclean devil knows how to allure them by wonderful representations, and to distress their souls, and they do not see how they shall disengage themselves from him. But I would advise these persons, (1) to be afraid of such evil motions of lust. It is the design of your enemy to bring you to a most grievous fall: repel forthwith those motions and ideas, that arise and are injected into you, as ye would shake fire from your clothes, and keep all your members under, that they may not seduce you: yea, like chaste Job, "make a covenant with your eyes, that they may not look upon a maid," Job xxxi. 1. The words of James are applicable here, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," James iv. 7. (2) Employ yourselves with something or other: be either industriously engaged in your calling; or with some work, which is otherwise not so necessary; or associate with decent company, and discourse with them of civil, or ecclesiastical, or more spiritual matters; or sing a psalm, or spiritual song, either alone, or with others: "Be always busy with some work, that the devil may find you occupied," saith one of the ancients. (3) Be much engaged in prayer, complain of your case to the Lord, call upon him, and plead with him to help you: yea, abstain also sometimes from such meats and drinks, as inflame the spirits; "This kind can go out by nothing, but by prayer and fasting," Mark ix. 29. (4) Let husbands and wives love one another heartily, that they may not loathe one another, and that their conjugal affection may not be diverted to a stranger. See what Solomon and Paul say, Prov. v. 17—21. 1 Cor. vii. 2—5. (5) Let unmarried persons, who cannot contain themselves, enter into an honour-

able marriage, "but only in the Lord," as the apostle adviseth, 1 Cor. vii. 39, that is, in the fear of the Lord, after asking counsel of the Lord, and with a person who fears the Lord: "The sons of God must not see the daughters of men, that they are fair, and take them wives of all whom they choose;" it was this that corrupted the old world, as Moses relates, Gen. vi. 1, 2. "Beauty is vain, and favour is deceitful; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised," saith Solomon, Prov. xxxi. 30. (6) I show you a still more excellent way; let every one of you enter into a spiritual marriage with the Son of God, and let him who hath connected himself with him in that blessed marriage covenant, devote his love wholly to him, and delight himself in him. This would detach the soul from too great a love to the creature, and "they who had wives would be as though they had none," 1 Cor. vii 29. "The Lord would then delight in you; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so your God would rejoice over you," as he saith, Isaiah lxii. 4, 5, and "ye should be blessed," and according to Rev. xix. 9, "be called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." Amen.

THE

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

EXPLAINED.

XLII. LORD'S DAY.

Exod. xx. 15. Thou shalt not steal.

Q. 110. *What doth God forbid in the eighth commandment?*

A. God forbids not only those thefts and robberies which are punishable by magistrates; but he comprehends under the name of theft all wicked tricks and devices, whereby we design to appropriate to ourselves the goods which belong to our neighbour; whether it be by force, or under the appearance of right; as by unjust weights, ells, measures, fraudulent merchandize, false coins, usury, or by any other way forbidden by God; as also all covetousness, all abuse and waste of his gifts.

Q. 111. *But what doth God require in this command?*

A. That I promote the advantage of my neighbour in every instance I can or may; and deal with him as I desire to be dealt with by others: further also, that I faithfully labour, that I may be able to relieve the needy.

"GOD," saith Paul to the Athenians, Acts xvii. 25, "giveth to all life, breath, and all things." Life and breath are either "the breath of life," which "God hath breathed into man," as Moses testifieth, Gen. ii. 17. Or if life and breath be considered distinctly, life is that which gives existence to man by his creation or birth, and breath, by which he inhales and exhales the air in breathing, is the action and preservation of his life by the influence of God, by which he maintains that life, which he hath given. But as neither life nor breath can endure, unless the powers, which are continually wasted by perspiration, be recompensed again, therefore God giveth us all things to maintain our life and breath, as food and clothing. The Lord is indeed "a faithful Creator," 1 Peter iv. 19. "The living God giveth us all things richly to enjoy," saith the apostle, 1 Tim. vi. 17. Man, although he is the most excellent of all God's creatures on earth, was nevertheless created by God after all the creatures: and why? it was in order that God might introduce him into a plentiful habitation, and thus show that he would maintain his life and breath. If it had pleased the Lord, he could have maintained the life and breath of man immediately, as he supported Moses, Elias and Christ forty days and nights; but he would afford continually new evidences of his independence, allsufficiency, wisdom and goodness, and of man's dependence on his Maker. As the Lord then giveth man all things to preserve him alive, so he chooses that he should also retain them, and he doth not permit any person to bereave him of those things, that he may not by the want of them lose the breath of life. Therefore he saith, as the only Lawgiver, who can save and destroy, "Thou shalt not steal." He required in the sixth commandment, that no man should kill his neighbour; and since the woman is the delight of his eyes, and thus refreshes and continues his life and breath, therefore the Lord forbids also adultery in the seventh commandment. But can any man retain and enjoy the breath of his life with the wife whom he loves, when others deprive him of food and clothing? surely no; and therefore the Lawgiver enjoins on every man in the eighth commandment, that he should not steal.

The instructor explaining this commandment, shows for that purpose,

I. The sins that are forbidden in it, *Question* 110.

II. The virtues that are commanded in it, *Question* 111.

1. The sin which the Lawgiver forbids here is stealing. We will survey this iniquity first in itself, and then in its causes; and will

then also attend to the abominable nature of the sin. The Hebrew word *ganab* signifies to do something secretly, that is shameful, and of which a person is ashamed. When "David mourned for Absalom," by whose death nevertheless the insurrection against him was quelled, "the victory was turned into mourning to all the people, and the people gat them by stealth into the city, as people being ashamed, steal away, when they flee in battle," as we read, 2 Sam. xix. 1, 2, 3. And this word signifies doing thus particularly by deceit, as "Absalom stole the heart of the men of Israel," 2 Sam. xv 6, when by deceitful speeches he withdrew the minds of the Israelites from his father, and inclined them to himself. And so stealing consists in "taking our neighbour's property from him, with or without his knowledge, against his mind."

God hath given to every man his particular portion of the goods of this world, as his property. It was his will that Adam should "subdue the earth," and all the creatures on it to himself," and that he should have dominion over them," Gen. i. 28. But when men multiplied, it was necessary that each of them should have his portion: "Cain, a tiller of the ground, had therefore the fruits of the ground, and Abel, a shepherd, had his sheep," Gen. iv. 3, 4. When men were not yet so numerous, that they could occupy the whole earth, every man became the owner of that land, and of those goods, which he first found. When the whole body of men purposed to settle together in the land of Shinar, and were unwilling to disperse over the whole earth, the Lord defeated their purpose by confounding their language, that he might induce them to dwell on all the earth, and each to take for his property the possession that was allotted him; for when "the Most High separated the sons of Adam, he divided to the nations their inheritance," Deut. xxxii. 8. Are there at present no more vacant lands to be occupied, every individual nevertheless holds, as his special goods and property, that which he obtains by right of inheritance, by traffic, learning, and any honourable art, or by the labour of his hands, and thus "he eats his own bread," according to 2 Thess. iii. 12. It is therefore, considering this wise distribution of goods among men, exceedingly preposterous in certain persons,* to assert, with the ancient Essenes, a community of goods, whereby all things should be common to all, and none should have aught as his own;

* By these the author designs the Labadists, a sect which existed in his time, but which hath since fallen into oblivion. They were so called from John Labadie, their founder, a minister of the Reformed Church of France, a great enthusiast, who held several other erroneous tenets.

this would encourage slothfulness, and exclude liberality. In order that the Israelite might "open his hand wide to his brother, to his poor, and to his needy," the Lord saith, that "the poor should not cease out of the land," Deut xv. 11. It is true, in the first Christian church all who believed were together, and had all things in common; neither said any of them, that aught of the things that he possessed was his own, but they had all things common," as Luke relateth, Acts ii. 44. iv. 32. But this was only a special case for that time, and it proceeded from the heat of the power of that love, which consumed them and their goods through the power of godliness; but it was not general, neither was it a command of the apostles: every man was permitted to keep his goods for his own use, as Peter declares to Ananias, Acts v. 4. John had his own house, and maintained the mother of Jesus in it, John xix. 27. If it had been otherwise, it would have been unnecessary, that the believing Gentiles should send, every one according to his ability, their charitable contributions to the believing Jews, as is testified, Acts xi. 28, 29, 30, neither would it have been of any use, that Paul should urge that liberality by so many motives, 1 Cor. xvi. 1—4. 2 Cor. viii. and ix. For this command is founded in the property, that men have in these or those goods; for stealing is a taking of another person's property to ourselves, without his consent.

Theft is divided into the grosser or greater, and the lesser. The grosser or greater is that which is punishable by the magistrate, because it tendeth to the destruction of the commonwealth. This is,

1. "Manstealing," when a person steals a human being, to sell him, or to beg with him, and thus to gain aught by him; so Joseph complained that "he had been stolen out of the land of the Hebrews," Gen. xi. 15. The Lord God required that such thieves should be punished with death: he saith, Exod. xxi. 16, "He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, shall surely be put to death." See also Deut. xxiv. 7, and 1 Tim i. 10. But since we do not buy men in this country, this sin doth not prevail among us: it happens indeed sometimes, that lazy beggars steal children, in order to beg with them, but this is also rare: the Jesuits and monks nevertheless often render themselves guilty of this theft, for they entice children, seduce them from their parents, and carry them against their parents mind into monasteries.

2. "Stealing cattle," although it is not so atrocious an offence, as stealing men, must also be considered as punishable by the magistrate. The Lord saith, Exod. xxii. 1, "If a man shall steal an ox,

or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep." The penalty for an ox was greater than that for a sheep, because they made use of oxen for ploughing and husbandry: he therefore, who stole an ox, not only deprived the owner of his property, as he did, who stole a sheep, but also discommoded the possessor in tilling his land.

3. We add to this "housebobbery," that is, stealing money, or household goods, clothes, victuals, or other matters, whether the thief take aught of the goods that are at hand, in passing by, or whether he filch aught from the owner, while he is talking, or otherwise engaged: or whether he enter privately into the house, or break into it, and take whatever pleaseth him. The civil law of Israel permitted the master of the house to "kill the thief, who broke into his house by night; but if the sun were risen, he might not kill him, but the thief was to make full restitution, yea, to give double: If he had nothing wherewith to make restitution, he was to be sold for his theft," Exod. xxii. 2—4. We cannot determine from the civil law of Israel, that we have now a right to kill a thief, who steals cattle, or household goods, since this law was ordained only for that people and country, and cannot well be observed in other countries and nations: among the Israelites the thief was able to make full restitution of what he had stolen, because among them every man had his immovable possesison of lands; and if he had spent all, and had empoverished himself, he might be sold, and his debt compensated, according to Exod. xxii. 3. But this hath not place among us. It is true, we could now confine the thief in a house of correction, but he could not then compensate his theft, or restore to the owner that which he had stolen from him five, four, or twofold. We dare not therefore determine whether the magistrate may not punish grosser acts of theft, which are aggravated by many circumstances, with death. But it appears too hard to punish simple theft severely, especially when it proceeds from poverty, either with death, or with a great contempt of the thief: Solomon saith, Prov. vi. 30, 31. "Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry: but if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold, he shall give all the substance of his house."

4. Unfaithful magistrates and collectors render themselves guilty of "peculation," or stealing from the public, when they exhaust the poor commons, in order to enrich themselves: "As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear, so is a wicked ruler over the poor people," saith the wise man, Prov. xxviii. 15. Such were the rulers of Israel: "they plucked the skin from off the Israelites, and their flesh from

and see whether they will not come out leprous. Think not that ye have cleansed your hearts in this respect, and are pure of this sin, because ye are so blind, that ye do not know yourselves. Paul, before he was converted, blasphemed God, and he nevertheless knew not that he did it, as he confessed afterwards, when he was better enlightened, 1 Tim. i. 15. Yea, he compelled others to blaspheme, and thought that he did God service, Acts. xxvi. 9, 10, 11. Only attend to all your former doings, and ye will see that your whole life hath been altogether without and dishonourable to God. And it is therefore evident, that ye take his name in vain, that he is not your covenant God, that ye are guilty in his sight, and that he will not hold you guiltless.

Alas! that with the jailer, ye cried out with trembling, on account of your great guilt, "What must we do to be saved?" Ye would then learn how the Lord could hold you guiltless; for this would cause your souls to flee out of themselves to him, who suffered blasphemy, and on account of blasphemy. Endeavour not only to restrain your mouths from uttering such dreadful language, but also to be found wholly in Christ, and with "the Corinthians, who were before blasphemers, to be washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by the Spirit of God," as the apostle testifieth of them, 1 Cor. vi. 10, 11.

But, believers, ye also have frequently sinned against this commandment. Reflect only on your former behaviour, on all your free thoughts and words, your vain and dissolute conversation, and how ye have reproached God during your "ignorance and unbelief," like Paul 1 Tim. i. 13. Ye have laden yourselves with a heavy burthen of guilt, ye have seen it, and know how it oppressed you, and with what dreadful distress your souls were seized, when ye saw that God would not hold you guiltless; but ye have with Paul, "obtained mercy," 1 Tim. i. 13. God could not, and he nevertheless doth hold you guiltless: his Son hath atoned for your reproaching of the Lord in your stead: "The zeal of God's house did eat him up, and the reproaches of them who reproached the Lord fell on him," as he complains by the mouth of David, Psalm lxix. 9. Because ye had blasphemed God, the wicked accused him of blasphemy, and slew him on account of it: he purchased the covenant of grace for you, and "though he was just, he suffered for you, who were unjust, that he might bring you to God," 1 Peter iii. 18, and that the Lord might no more be wroth with you, "that he might make an everlasting covenant with you, that he would not turn away

from you to do you good, and that he would put his fear in your hearts, that ye might not depart from him." Jer. xxxii. Therefore,

1, Let your souls wonder and be amazed at the great and free grace, that hath been shown to you. Ye who were guilty are holden guiltless; the Son of God, who was guiltless, was holden guilty, and punished in your stead, and all grace is conveyed to you thereby: "For him who knew no sin hath God made to be sin for you, that ye might be made the righteousness of God in him," according to 2 Cor. v. 21. Why did not God lay the guilt of your blasphemy upon you, as well as upon others? It was only free grace. Behold it, wonder at it and rejoice, praise him on account of it, like Paul, when he saith, 1 Tim. i. 15, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

2. The name of the Lord is still often taken in vain by you: must ye not own it? ye know surely that his fear doth not always impress your hearts, as it ought; how often are ye but little influenced by it, as well when ye are engaged in the worship of the Lord, as when ye are not. Therefore the soul should, as often as she renders herself guilty, lay hold on the Son of God for reconciliation, and dip herself in the fountain of his blood, that she may be reconciled and cleansed. He is indeed "the opened fountain," which is always "open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness," Zech. xiii. 1.

3. Let it henceforward be your earnest endeavour, that the fear of the Lord your God may direct you in all your conversation, so that ye may not reproach, but glorify him: "If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear," 1 Peter i. 17. The fear of God should restrain you from sinning, especially from scandalous sins, which induce men to blaspheme the name of God: "Shall not his excellency make you afraid, and his dread fall on you?" may we ask you with Job, ch. xiii. ii. Job himself refrained from sinning, because "destruction from God was a terrour to him; and by reason of his highness he could not endure," ch. xxxi. 23. So Joseph also acted, Gen. xxxix. 9, and Nehemiah, Neh. v. 15. An awe for God ought to restrain your tongues and mouths, and prevent you from "speaking so exceeding proudly, and from letting arrogancy come out of your mouths: for the Lord is a God of judgment," as Hannah admonisheth, 1 Sam. ii. 3. We ought to follow even our daily callings with "fear and trembling," as the apostle enjoins upon servants, Eph. vi. 5. Therefore plead the covenant

his son acted worse, and abominably, when he resolved to render that yoke much heavier, 1 Kings xii 1—14. It is also force when a person endeavours by his power, riches, courage and friends to control justice, in order to withhold from inferiors their dues, James bewails the poor on this account, when he saith, James ii. 6. "Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment-seats?" Job was innocent of this great transgression: hear his solemn protestation; "If I have lift up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate; then let mine arm fall from my shoulderblade, and mine arm be broken from the bone," Job xxxi. 21, 22.

The sinner, not contented with his own, and grasping after his neighbour's property, wishes nevertheless to appear honest, and will therefore endeavour to deprive him of it "under an appearance of right, as by unjust weights, ells and measures." He doth this, when he buys his wares with such as are too great, and sells them with such as are too small: "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in meteyard, in weight, or in measure," saith the Lord, Lev. xix. See how he explains this more particularly, Deut. xxv. 13—16, and Prov xx. 10. Hear how the wicked are reproved on account of this kind of theft, Micha vi. 10. "Are there not yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable?"

We may add to this cheating with our "merchandise," or wares, which unjust men adulterate, and set off in such a manner, that they appear better than they are. This is "selling chaff for wheat," Amos viii. 6.

The Lord is not less displeased with "false coins," when a person debases, or clips money, or when he knowingly passes base or clipped money for more than it is worth. Or a person, in order to deceive his neighbour with the money, will miscount it, either in writing, or reckoning, or weighing, like Israel, who in receiving money, "made the shekel," that is, the weight of the shekel, "great," Amos viii. 5.

The instructor adds to this "usury," that is, exorbitant interest, which we take for money or goods, that we have lent to others, in order to accommodate them. But this commandment doth not forbid that usury, which is agreeable to equity, to the current value of money, of merchandise, or of the profits that others make by our money or goods, or according to the measure which the magistrate appoints. Such money may be considered as just; for how can we condemn a person, who lends another money, from which he derives

advantage, for sharing in that advantage: there cannot be otherwise any trafficking or trading; may we derive profit from our wares which we sell, why then not also from our money, which we lend? The Lord Jesus approves of such usury, when he teacheth us, that we should endeavour to derive profit from our spiritual gifts after the manner of usurers, Matt. xxv. 14—30. But when usury is forbidden, we must understand by it that griping usury, which must necessarily consume and empoverish the person who borrows upon usury. To such griping usury belongs also taking interest of the poor, to whom we ought to lend money without interest, that we may relieve their necessity, although we could not hope that they would recompence our favour, or restore the money which we have lent them, as the Saviour commands, Luke vi. 35. It is also unjust usury to take such necessary pledges of security of the poor, to whom we lend money, as they cannot spare. The Lord God was highly displeased, and would punish it severely, when any one "took another's garment, or his millstone, and especially his upper millstone, to pledge," Exod. xxii. 25—27. Deut. xxiv. 6.

There are "other wicked tricks and devices, by which men appropriate their neighbour's goods to themselves." Who can enumerate them all? We will mention only a few. For instance, (a) That wicked judges receive bribes, in order to pervert justice: "Thou shalt not take any gift; for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous," saith the Lord, Exod. xxiii. 8. Deut. xvi. 19. The princes of Judah are taxed as "companions of thieves," because "they loved gifts," Isaiah i. 23. (b) The unfaithful managing and devouring of estates which we can get into our hands, loading them with so many expences that they dwindle into nothing: but "wo to the writers, who prescribe grievousness, to turn aside the needy from judgment," &c. Isaiah x. 1, 2. To which we must also refer alienating goods that have been committed to our trust; the Lord condemns such a conduct, Exod. xxii. 10—13; also neglecting to restore that which we have borrowed, and not paying our debts; for this is "the work of the wicked," as David saith, Psalm xxxvii. 21. It is of the same kind also, when a person doth not produce goods which he hath found, nor restore them to the owner, as the Lord requireth, Lev. vi. 3. Deut. xxii. 1. Also concealing stolen goods, in order to be "a partner with the thief," as the wise king speaks, Prov. xxix. 24. (c) Empoverishing debtors, who are willing to pay their debts, and have not contracted them wilfully, falling on them forthwith, in order to ruin them, and turn them out naked and bare: this is a hateful conduct, as the Sa-

viour shows in that wicked servant, Matt. xviii. 28, 29, 30. (d) Keeping back the wages of the hireling, and abridging them: a wo is denounced against those who do thus, Jer. xxii. 13. This, as James informs us, is "a crying sin," James v. 4. God will not allow us to keep such wages with us all night, Leviticus xix, 13. (e) It is also abominable to be slothful and sluggish, either when we labour for another, and thus eat the bread of idleness, contrary to Prov. xxxi. 17; or when we do our own work: "He that is slothful in his work, is brother to him that is a great waster," saith Solomon, Prov. xviii. 9. Paul condemns such persons, 2 Thess. iii. 10—12, and he saith that "they ought not to eat." (f) Displacing and removing land-marks, in order to enlarge our own, and abridge another's land, is also a theft, which is forbidden, Deut. xix. 14. Prov. xxii. 28. xxiii. 10: as also stealing out of another's garden, or orchard, and so likewise "putting our cattle into our neighbour's field, and letting them feed in it," contrary to the divine prohibition, Exod. xxii. 5. (g) It is also a conduct, which God forbids, to supplant our neighbour in his trade, by disparaging him and his wares: this is contrary to "charity, which envieth not," 1 Cor. xiii. 4. Crying down wares, which are offered for sale, in order to buy them at a cheap rate. this we ought to condemn with Solomon, Prov. xx. 14, "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer; but when he is gone his way, he boasteth." We ought to disapprove no less of "monopolizing goods, buying them up, or forestalling," especially eatables, by which a person obtains the sole command of these things, and can regulate the sale of them, raise the price of them to an enormous height, and so enrich himself beyond measure, and thus exhaust the poor commons: "He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him," saith the wise man. Prov. xi. 26. (h) It is exceedingly detestable in children to rob their parents, and to deem this notwithstanding to be right: hear what the same wise man saith of it, Prov. xxviii. 24, "Whoso robbeth his father, or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression, the same is the companion of a destroyer." The time would fail me, if I should speak of deceitful bargains, receipts, or bills of discharge, of the violation of contracts and conditions, on account of some loss that might accrue to us; of unjust judgments and pleadings, in order to abridge our neighbour; of that dishonest thirst for gain, which is shown in betting, playing at dice, and gaming, in keeping drinking-houses, whore-houses, and gaming-houses.

A person who doth not know himself, wonders how any one can be so dishonest, as to be guilty of stealing from others: but he considers not that it is restraining grace, that hinders him from sinning against God in this manner. The sinner being destitute of the Lord, and not knowing what is essentially good for him, can never be satisfied with his earthly goods, he will always have still more, as we will show more fully on the tenth commandment. And hence ariseth, (1) "Covetousness," as the immediate cause of theft, by which a person craves insatiably, and covets vehemently an abundance of earthly goods, and endeavours to keep them, and will not make a moderate use of them, nor communicate of them to others: "Wo to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house," saith the Lord, Hab. ii. 9. And thus covetousness consists in desiring to be rich, 1 Tim. vi. 16. He who is infected with this disease will be repeatedly seduced more or less to theft: "He falls into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition; for the love of money is the root of all evil," saith Paul, 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. His desire of having whets his understanding, and teaches him to increase his own by I know not what methods under an appearance of right: "all the instruments of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right:" thus we read, Isaiah xxxii. 7. And therefore we cannot sufficiently wonder that the Socinians deny that covetousness was forbidden under the Old Testament. This is a sin, from which many are averse, but not on account of their satisfaction in God, and their contentment with that portion of earthly goods, which he giveth them, but they proceed to another extreme, to wit, (2) to "an abuse and wasting of the gifts of God," by excess in eating, drinking, clothing, household furniture, and pleasures, which are otherwise lawful; and no less by gaming, playing, idle betting and whoredom, by which such persons empoverish themselves and their households, and are easily seduced to stealing. The wisest of kings had therefore reason to say to his son, "Be not amongst winebibbers, amongst riotous eaters of flesh; for the drunkard and the glutton shall surely come to poverty," &c. Prov. xxiii. 20. When the steward had wasted his master's goods, and was obliged to render an account of his stewardship, he fell into iniquity, Luke xvi. 1—3.

Stealing is abominable, in whatever manner it is perpetrated: "All that do such things, and all that do unrighteously are an abomination unto the Lord thy God," saith Moses, Deut. xxv. 16. For, (a) stealing is a dissatisfaction with the dispensation of God, by which men

therefore "take the name of God in vain," as it is said, Prov. xxx. 9. The thief destroys the security and tranquility of human society, he occasions strife and contention; he exposes himself to ignominy and shame, when he is caught. See this Jer. ii. 16. And in order that he may not be ashamed, he will endeavour to conceal his theft with lies and false oaths, and he renders himself thus still more guilty, as the Lord intimateth, Lev. vi. 1—4. (b) This iniquity is an offence, which is punishable by the magistrates, who were obliged to punish certain acts of theft with death, as manstealing; Exod xxi. 16, sacrilege, for which Achan was stoned, Joshua vii. 20—26. If a man broke into a house by night, the master of the house might kill him instantly, without incurring the guilt of murder, Exod. xxii. 2. David pronounced the man who had robbed a poor man of his little ewelamb, guilty; but other thefts were to be atoned by restoring two, four, five and sevenfold. Yea, the Lord God himself punishes this sin, not only by exposing such unrighteous persons to reproach, but also sometimes by reducing them to extreme poverty; he curses the thief and deceiver in all that he hath, not only in what he hath stolen, but also in what he hath not stolen; "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark" was proclaimed aloud from mount Ebal, Deut. xxvii. 17. "The roll of the curse, the length whereof was twenty cubits, and the breadth whereof was ten cubits, God would bring into the house of the thief, to cut him off, and to consume his house, with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof," Zech. v. 1—4. Yea, he who gathereth riches, but not by right, is sometimes snatched away by an early death from his stolen riches, according to the threatening, Jer. xvii. 11. He leaves them indeed to his heirs, but not with the blessing of God, but what becomes of the soul of such an unrighteous person? It doth not surely go to the glory of the righteous; for "neither thieves, nor covetous persons shall inherit the kingdom of God," 1 Cor. vi. 10. Therefore the end of such persons will surely be destruction, when they "will vomit up the riches, which they have swallowed down, and God will cast them out of their belly," as Zophar speaks, Job xx. 15.

II. But doth he, who only abstains from stealing, keep this commandment? surely no, unless he also practise the virtues that are opposed to stealing, and so (1) "promote the advantage of his neighbour in every instance that he can and may." Man was created for the advantage of his neighbour, as well as for himself; he must indeed love his neighbour as himself, which he doth not do when he forbears to promote his neighbour's advantage as well as

his own: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others," saith the apostle of the Gentiles, Philip. ii. 4. Therefore the Lord saith, Deut. xxii. 1—4, "Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them," &c. Job quitted himself well in this respect, when "he was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame," &c. Job xxix. 15—17. But the wisdom of the just must direct us herein, and teach us that we must not do these things, unless we can and may. It is sinful, and the work of fools to empoverish ourselves in order to succour others, or by undue methods to deliver them out of difficulties, in which they have involved themselves by their iniquitous actions, that we may thus act the part of good men. (2) "We should deal and act with our neighbour, as we desire that he should deal and act with us." When we consider and regard our neighbour's case in this manner as our own, we will not wrong him, nor suffer him to remain under a difficulty; it is also a work of equity and justice: even the law and the prophets enjoin by the mouth of the Saviour, Matt. vii. 12, that "whatsoever things we would that men should do unto us, we should do even so to them." But if we shall be able to do this, we must, (3) "labour faithfully," or be diligent and industrious in our calling. "the work which our hand findeth to do," according to the words of the preacher, Eccl. ix. 10. The apostle requires that men should "work in quietness, and eat their own bread," 2 Thess. iii. 8—12. But the commandment of the Lord, and not our own advantage by means of our faithful labour ought to be our principal motive, that we may do this in obedience to God, since it pleaseth him to provide for us by means of our faithful labour, and so "we must do all things heartily, as to the Lord," according to Col. iii. 23. And therefore we ought to take good heed, that we have a proper calling, and we ought "to abide therein with God," as Paul speaks, 1 Cor. vii. 20, 24. This doth not mean that a person may not change his calling, for he is sometimes obliged to do that by events which befal him through the appointment of God: but we may not desert one calling for another rashly, and without asking counsel of the Lord. Let no man think that it will suffice to labour for himself and his family: he must do that also, "that he may relieve the needy." If there be any duty, which is at once human, religious and christian, it is that of relieving the needy: "We may not hide ourselves from our own flesh," Isaiah lviii. 7. How often is this commanded as a religious duty? yea, for this end God suffered the poor to remain in Israel. See Deut. xv. 7—11. Eccl. xi. 1, 2. Yea, this duty is also enjoined

upon Christians: "Distribute to the necessity of the saints, saith Paul, Rom. xii. 13. See this repeatedly commanded and urged, 1 Cor. xvi. 1—3. 2 Cor. viii. and ix. Luke relates how nobly the first Christians quitted themselves in this respect, Acts iv. 34, 35. xi. 28—30. In order to practise this goodly virtue, which is so pleasing to God, we must labour faithfully; this is enjoined, Eph. iv. 28, "Let him that stole, steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." Praiseworthy was the example of "Dorcas, who made coats and garments for the widows," Acts ix. 39.

APPLICATION.

If this law were given, hearers, that it might give life, and that we might seek our righteousness by it, we should have nothing else to do now, but exhort you to flee from the sins that are forbidden, and to pursue the virtues which are commanded in it. But that is impossible for this law, for it is become weak through the flesh; and therefore all who are of the works of the law are under the curse. God therefore gave this law, that the offence might abound, and thus also that grace might much more abound. In order then, that our observations on this commandment may be salutary to you, it will be necessary,

1. That each of you should compare his heart and actions with what is forbidden and commanded here. We can easily believe that ye are not guilty of the grosser acts of theft, even manstealing and stealing cattle: but there are other wicked practices and devices, by which we take to ourselves the property of another. Come hither, and examine what ye possess, and what ye have handled, but lack at present. How did ye obtain it? did ye get all in an honest way? doth nothing of what belongeth to another cleave to your fingers? have ye behaved yourselves righteously in every respect, as well in reckoning with others, as in giving and receiving money, in trafficking, trading, handicrafts, labour, and in demanding and paying debts? are ye pure with respect to all this? have ye always kept the middle way between greediness, and abusing and squandering the gifts of God, and that in every instance? Ye need not ask whether we must be so exact and perfect in all these points; for ye

know, at least, ye ought to know, that he who continueth not in all things which are written in the law, is cursed. Doth any one say, I know not that I have transgressed in any instance. It is possible, that thou art so just and righteous in a civil respect, that thou dost not possess aught of what belongs to another; but hast thou then also performed what is commanded here? dost thou think, yes? I should believe that such an one had never yet seen himself in the mirrour of this perfect commandment, but that his heart deceives him, like Ephraim's, who said, "I am become rich, I have found me out substance; in all my labours they shall find no iniquity in me, that were sin," Hosea xii. 8. But, friends, this is not the way to clear your account, when the Lord will begin to reckon with you, and to state the amount of it. It behooves you indeed to review your account frequently, and it will appear that your debt is great, and the amount that God might justly condemn you. Therefore "examine yourselves strictly, yea, examine yourselves strictly, ye listless people," agreeably to the admonition, Zeph. ii. 1. Humble yourselves, abase yourselves, and be ashamed before the Lord, "as a thief, when he is found," Jer. ii. 26.

2. Have ye taken aught from your neighbour, keep it not with you, but restore it to him. It belongs to another, it is not yours. If ye keep it, it will become a canker in all your goods, which are otherwise your rightful property, and it will consume them, and empoverish you. Yea, God will in his time make your stolen goods a fire in your bowels, and compel you to vomit up that which ye have swallowed down, like Judas, who returned his illgotten silver pieces, and when he could not get rid of them, threw them furiously down in the temple. What think ye, shall a sinner find favour with God, while he withholds stolen goods from their owner? Hear what the Lord saith to the Jews, Isaiah i. 16—18. "Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, &c. Come then, and let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow," &c. Thus we read also, Ezek. xxxiii. 15. "If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that which he hath robbed, &c. he shall surely live, he shall not die." When Zaccheus found favour in the eyes of the Lord, he was forthwith ready to "restore fourfold, if he had by false accusation taken aught from any man," Luke xix. 8. Paul offered to pay Philemon even what Onesimus had taken from him, Philemon, vs. 8, 9. But I suspect that many will decline to do this, because they have robbed others of so much, that they would be obliged to surrender all the substance of their house, and thus em-

poverish themselves. But is it not better to be an honest poor man, and possess grace, than to be a rich thief, and remain graceless? Do ye not dare to return aught, because it would expose you to contempt, ye may do it by another person, whom ye can trust, or which is preferable by a letter written in an uncouth hand. Is that which was robbed already consumed, so that it is not in your power to repay it, do nevertheless as much as ye can, by sparing something, and living more scantily, that ye may gather a little, and restore that.

3. Bu think not, after ye have satisfied men for what was taken from them, that God is then also satisfied. By our unrighteousness we render ourselves debtors not only to men, to satisfy them for what we have alienated from them, but we render ourselves guilty also before the Lord. And therefore the unrighteous person, whether he be more or less unrighteous, must endeavour to be reconciled unto God. O that ye were concerned about this, and cried out with the church, Micha vi 6, 7. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression? the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? We should say to you, "Seek the reconciling blood" of the Surety and Mediator Jesus, by which "he restored that which he took not away," as he foretold, Psalm lxix. 4. Those Corinthians, who were before "thieves and covetous, were" not only "sanctified by the Spirit, but also justified in the name," and thus by the blood "of the Lord Jesus," 1 Cor. vi. 10, 11. For "God hath set forth" his Son "to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness," Rom. iii. 25. Flee therefore to him, and lay hold on him for the reconciliation of your guilt.

4. Beware of defiling yourselves again, and endeavour to be righteous in every instance: "Let him that stole, steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth," as we have just now heard Paul admonish us, Eph. iv. 28. Be afraid of your covetous and prodigal heart, pray against it with David, Psalm cxix. 36. "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies and not to covetousness." Oppose the lust of the eyes, which hath enticed so many persons to unrighteousness: when "Achan saw a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold, then he coveted them, and took them," Joshua vii. 21. Endeavour to be content with what the Lord hath given you, though it be ever so little: "Godliness with contentment is indeed great gain: for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we

can carry nothing out of it:" thus speaks Paul, 1 Tim. vi. 6—8. and he practised this lesson himself: "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content," saith he, Philip. iv. 11. We ought with Agur, Prov. xxx. 8 9, even to deprecate "riches" as well as "poverty," and to seek only "the food that is convenient for us," Prov. xxx. 8, 9, and we ought more especially to aim at those better "treasures," which are laid up "in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupteth, and where thieves cannot break through, nor steal," as the Lord Jesus commands, Mat. vi. 19, 20. Doth it nevertheless please the Lord to enrich you with many earthly goods, "do not then set your hearts on them, and trust not in them, neither be proud of them: but do good, be rich in good works, willing to communicate," as David and Paul require, Psalm lxii. 10. 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18. Are ye poor and in want, commit your concerns to the Lord, even your Father, if ye fear and love him. Hear what Jesus saith, Mat. vi. 31. "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? for after all these things do the Gentiles seek: for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." The Lord hath surely said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," Heb. xiii. 5. Fret not on account of the prosperity of the wicked, ye have more than they. See what David saith, Psalm xxxvii. 7, 16. "Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass:" for "a little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked." Ye have a perfect right, in and through Christ, to the least, yea, to all things; for "all things are yours, because ye are his, as Paul teacheth, 1 Cor. iii. 21—23. Ye will obtain the full possession of all things hereafter, when the wealthy wicked will not have even a drop of water. Jesus saith, Mat. v. 3, 5. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And "blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth." Amen.

THE

NINTH COMMANDMENT

EXPLAINED.

XLIII. LORD'S DAY.

Exod. xx. 16. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

Q. 112. *What is requ'red in the ninth command?*

A. That I bear false witness against no man; nor falsify any man's words; that I be no backbiter, or slanderer; that I do not judge, or join in condemning any man rashly or unheard; but that I avoid all sorts of lies and deceit, as the proper works of the devil, unless I would bring down upon me the heavy wrath of God: likewise that in judgment and all other dealings, I love the truth, speak it uprightly, and confess it: also that I defend and promote, as much as I am able, the honour and good character of my neighbour.

"THE tongue," saith the apostle James, "is a fire, a world of iniquity, which defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of hell. The tongue can no man tame, it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison," James iii.

6, 8. The heart of man, filled by sin with every abomination, and producing every evil motion, corrupts all the members of the body, and directs them to evil, rendering them "servants of uncleanness and of iniquity to iniquity," as Paul speaks, Rom. vi. 19. But the tongue is more particularly set on fire thus, by that evil corruption, as a fire and a world of iniquity, so that it defileth even the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, by urging it violently on, like an unquenchable fire, and like a wild beast, that is untameable. Therefore holy men have been so careful and circumspect with respect to their tongue, and they have endeavoured to bridle it, like an unruly horse. David said, Psalm xxxix. 1. "I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle." We may therefore, with that man after God's own heart, compare the tongue to a city, which is well provided with bulwarks of teeth, and doors of lips, and yet hath need of a guard to watch, and to defend it against tumults within, and the assaults of enemies without: hear him therefore pray, Psalm cxli. 3. "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips." It is also remarkable, that there is only a single guard, that is, one commandment in the law, against other sins, but against the sins of the tongue there is a double guard of two commandments: it was not enough that God required in the first table of the law, and in the third commandment, that we should watch against the sins of the tongue, but he chooseth to do it also by this ninth commandment, that the tongue may not be perverted to bear false witness against our neighbour.

The Lord commanding us to love our neighbour as ourselves, requires of us that we should conformably to this, honour our parents, not kill our neighbour, not commit adultery, nor steal: but how shall we keep these commandments, if we bear false witness against our neighbour? "Death and life," and thus all that is dear to our neighbour, "is in the power of the tongue," saith Solomon, Prov. xviii. 21. Therefore the Lawgiver manifests his wisdom by annexing this commandment to the foregoing.

The instructor, in order to explain this commandment, shows

I. What is forbidden, and

II. What is commanded in it.

1. This commandment forbids "bearing false witness against our neighbour." We have shown before, that all men are our neighbours, because they are all made of one blood with us. We are called upon on many occasions to bear witness against our neighbours, but we must beware that we do not bear false witness against

them, or otherwise than we know to be the truth; which is done "in judgment," when falsehood and iniquity are practised there in an ungodly manner: "In the place of judgment there is wickedness, and in the place of righteousness there is iniquity:" this the preacher saw also in his time, Eccl. iii. 16. The Lawgiver hath also respect in a particular manner to bearing false witness in judgment, in which, when we are called upon to witness the truth, we answer and bear a false witness to injure our neighbour, as the Hebrew word *tagnaneh*, "to answer," intimates. This wickedness is frequently practised by different persons, who appear in judgment, as,

1. By the "plaintiff" or accuser, who accuseth his neighbour falsely, by which he endangers his good name, his life and property, yea, his whole prosperity. Of this the Jewish council rendered themselves exceedingly guilty, when they accused Jesus, who was perfectly innocent, before Pilate, saying, "we found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ, a king," Luke xxiii. 2.

2. By the defendant, when he denies the fault, of which he is justly accused, like Cain, who when he was cited before the divine tribunal, and asked "where his brother Abel was, said, I know not; am I my brother's keeper?" Gen iv. 9. He who fears not to do wrong, ought not to be afraid to confess that he hath done wrong, and to humble himself by submitting also to the proper punishment of his sin, with Achan, when Joshua required of him to confess and acknowledge his guilt, Joshua vii. 19—21. "Fools make a mock at sin: but with the righteous there is favour," according to the words of the wise king, Prov. xv. 9.

3. It is not less abominable, when "witnesses" utter a falsehood against a person, who is unjustly accused. How lamentable was the case of Naboth, when "two men of Belial were suborned against him, and witnessed falsely, Naboth blasphemed God and the king, and he was thereupon stoned!" 1 Kings xxi. 9—13. So also "the whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put him to death," as the members of that council found also many false witnesses, who were nevertheless of no service to them, Matt. xxvi. 59, 60. "The Lord hates a false witness," Prov. vi. 16, 19. God ordered the judges to inquire diligently whether the witnesses testified a falsehood, and if they did, that it should then be done to them, as it would have been done to the accused, if he had been accused according to truth, Deut. xix. 16—21. Although the Lawgiver forbids bearing false witness against our neighbour to his hurt,

we may nevertheless not bear false witness in his behalf to deliver him; for we may not deliver the guilty, and certainly not do evil, that good may come; and when we bear false witness for the guilty, we then bear false witness against the accuser, who is our neighbour also.

4. But still more atrocious than these are those wicked lawyers and attorneys, who defend false accusations, and by means of a smooth and eloquent tongue, or deceitful writings, darken the true circumstances of matters, mislead the judge, and delay a righteous sentence, so that an honest person can scarcely obtain justice. Such a lawyer was Tertullus, who pleaded in behalf of the Jews against Paul, Acts xxiv. 1—9. Verily such persons, who ought to assist the oppressed, and nevertheless load them still heavier, are pests of the human race, they promote the interest of hell, and defend the causes of the devil. They may remain unpunished in this world, but the wo, with which they are threatened, will pursue them, and cleave to them: "Wo unto them that call good evil, and evil good," saith God, Isaiah v. 20.

5. But that which surpasseth all other abominations is the conduct of those unjust judges, who fearing neither God nor man, do not regard the causes of the righteous for a long time, like that ungodly judge, of whom the Saviour speaks, Luke xviii. 2—4. And it is still worse in judges to pronounce an unjust sentence: "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord," saith the wisest of kings, Prov. xvii. 15. Whether it proceed from the incapacity and unskilfulness of the foolish judge, who is like a child in understanding; See Eccl. x. 16. Isaiah iii. 4, 12; or from unrighteousness, when the judge will not hear the accused, nor permit him to defend himself, as the Jewish council pronounced sentence in such an unjust manner against the Saviour, and his servant Paul, John vii. 47—52. xviii. 19—21. Acts xxiii. 1—3; or on account of bribes and self-interest: so the judges of Judah were "companions of thieves, every one loved gifts, and followed after rewards," Isaiah i. 23; or because the judge is a respecter of persons; is a person a friend or an enemy, rich or poor, courageous or fearful, the unjust judge will pervert justice accordingly: "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour," saith the Lawgiver, Lev. xix. 15. See also Exod. xxiii. 6—8. God denounceth a wo against such judges,

and saith, that "he will ease and avenge himself of those adversaries of him." Isaiah i. 24.

In the foregoing commandments only head-sins are mentioned; but their particular members are also comprehended under them: it is thus also here: when bearing false witness in judgment is opposed, it is then forbidden on other occasions also, as

4 "Falsifying the words of another," by giving them a sense different from that which they commonly have, and in which we know they were uttered. This is "that froward mouth, which we must put away from us, and those perverse lips, which we must put far from us," Prov. iv. 24. We misconstrue the words and meaning of another thus, either by adding something to our neighbour's words, by which they have an entirely different sense. The Saviour speaking of "the temple of his body," which he would raise up from the dead, saith, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," John ii. 19, 21, but the Jews perverted his words by adding to them, when they accused him, "that he had said, I will destroy this temple, which is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands," Mark xiv 38, when he had nevertheless not said, "I will destroy," but, "destroy ye;" he did not say, "the temple made with hands," but "this temple;" neither had he spoken "of another, but of the same temple," which they should destroy; but all these words they added by a false testimony. Or when we leave out something, in order to falsify a person's words, like the devil, who, that he might induce Christ to tempt his Father by casting himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, said from Psalm xci. 11, that "God would give his angels charge concerning him to keep him;" but he leaves out, "in all thy ways," Mat. iv. 6. We also falsify a person's words by gestures, whereby we give them another and a wrong colour. A person utters something that was said in jest, or from compassion, in such a manner, by an alteration of his countenance or voice, as if it were spoken in earnest, or from contempt. An abominable and false conduct! Who can be safe from persons of such a froward heart and perverse lips?

5. This commandment forbids also "backbiting," by which a person reports to others the secrets and failings of his neighbour to his hurt. "A talebearer revealeth secrets," saith the wise king, Prov. xi. 13. Whether a person do this from talkativeness, and for pastime, like "the Athenians, who spent their time in nothing else, but telling or hearing some new thing," Acts xvii. 21, and like the "tattling" women, of whom Paul speaks, 1 Tim. v. 13; or from a

fondness of ridiculing a person; as Job was the song and byword of contemptible persons, Job xxx 9; or from a desire of pleasing others, who are delighted with hearing their neighbour's secrets and evil doings, as Doeg informed Saul concerning David, by which it came to pass, that so many priests, and other inhabitants of Nob were slain, 1 Sam xxii 7, 19; or from envy and displeasure with our neighbour, that we may raise up new enemies against him And these persons, that they may not be accounted backbiters, will, in the first place, relate that which is good of their neighbour, and when another speaks well of him, they will assent to it, yet they will add a "but," or an "alas;" it is true, they will say, he hath that good quality, but it is a pity that he hath such and such a failing; and thus a person is condemned by himself for not doing well, and this is nevertheless an evil which is common under the sun, and occasions much disturbance. And surely those are not innocent of backbiting, who do not discountenance such backbiters, but show that they are pleased with them by listening to them, and encouraging them to say all that they know: "He is a wicked doer, who giveth heed to false lips, and a liar, who giveth ear to a naughty tongue," Prov. xvii. 4.

3. "Slandering" our neighbour, that is, belching out words of reproach against him, either when he is present or absent. David calls this, Psalm xv. 3, "Taking up a reproach against our neighbour." Therefore the slanderer is also called a reproacher, Psalm xliv. 16, as Shimei acted toward David, Ahab toward Elijah, and the Jews toward the apostles, 2 Sam xvi. 5—9. 1 Kings xviii 17. Acts xvii. 6. It is exceedingly wicked to do this with words; for "whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker," Prov xvii. 5, but it is worse and intolerable to do it with pasquils, and reproachful writings; no man can be reputed honest longer than such a reproachful writer chooseth; but let him conceal himself as much as he pleases, the Lord will find him out, and recompence his reproaches upon him.

4. The commandment concerning bearing false witness forbids also "judging, or joining in condemning any man rashly or unheard. "We have just now shown how this is done in judgment: but it is done also out of judgment; to which we must nevertheless not refer judging that a person is in the way to perdition, and warning him against it, when he discovers manifest tokens of his graceless condition by his exceeding ignorance, his abandoning of himself to the world, his hatred of the good, and of that which is good, and by other sins; for we must judge thus, that we may "save him by

fear, and pull him out of the fire," according to the exhortation of holy Jude, in his epistle, vs. 23. But we must refer to this, (a) judging that a person is or is not gracious from his prosperity or adversity, as the friends of Job decried him for a hypocrite, on account of his grievous afflictions: "No man knoweth either the love or hatred" of God, "by all that is before him. There is one event to the righteous and to the wicked," according to Eccl. ix. 1, 2. (b) Giving credit without further inquiry to every evil report concerning our neighbour, like Saul, who without any reason "heard the words of men,, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt," 1 Sam. xxiv. 10. This is "receiving a false report," which is forbidden, Exod. xxiii. 1. We must refer also to this, (c) judging presently the worst of our neighbour from any particular event, which happens through the disposal of divine providence. Because "a viper fastened upon Paul's hand, the Barbarians judged that he was a murderer, whom, though he had escaped the sea, vengeance suffered not to live," Acts xxviii. 2—4. (d) It is still more unjust to misconstrue and condemn the virtuous conduct of a person. When Hannah prayed with a low voice from sorrow, Eli judged "that she was drunk," 1 Sam. i. 10—16, and the wicked Jews judged the same of the apostles from their speaking in every language by the Spirit, Acts ii. 13. "John came neither eating nor drinking, and they said, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they said, Behold, a man gluttonous and a winebibber," Mat. xi. 18, 19. When he doth not allow himself time to eat and drink, his friends will "lay hold on him, as if he were beside himself," Mark iii. 20, 21. Because people cannot endure serious godliness, therefore they will decry, as Pharisees, hypocrites and legalists, persons who are not satisfied with the common manner of living, but endeavour to work out their salvation with fear and trembling. They will not be judged themselves according to truth from their evil behaviour, and they will nevertheless repeatedly condemn others on account of their godliness. But such persons set themselves up for judges in the stead of God: "He that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come," saith Paul, 1 Cor. iv. 4, 5. They who act thus "speak evil of the law, and judge it as judges," according to James iv. 11, 12. Therefore "judge not, that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged;" thus speaks the Lord, Mat. vii. 1, 2.

5. To this the instructor adds "all sorts of lies." By which we must understand, relating a matter for truth, which is nevertheless

not true, when a person knows not but that it is true; for he doth indeed tell a lie, but it is no lie in him, because he speaks according to the best of his knowledge; but he sins notwithstanding, because he might perhaps have known better, and he often speaks thus without necessity; but it is a complete lie, when a person speaks contrary to his better knowledge, and with a design to mislead others. Since now we bear false witness by all sorts of lies, therefore this commandment forbids, (a) Lying from custom, when a a person hath so accustomed himself to lying, that almost every word which he utters is a lie, and he can plead for it, as for a most certain truth, like "the Cretians, who were always liars," Titus i. 12, and like "the devil, who speaks lies, as of his own," John viii. 44. (b) Also lies by which a person guesses and supposeth a thing to be true, when he might nevertheless have known better, as the people of Antichrist, who are subject to "a strong delusion," and therefore "believe a lie," according to 2 Thess. ii. 11. (c) Hurtful lies, to injure our neighbour. So "the rich men of Judah were full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof spoke lies, and their tongue was deceitful in their mouth," Micha vi. 12. (d) Lies for our profit and advantage are also hateful, as Gehazi experienced, when he was punished with leprosy, Kings v. 21—27. To which we must refer also officious lies, uttered to procure an advantage to our neighbour, or to deliver him from some imminent danger. (e) And further jocular lies, to divert ourselves and others, as the idle Israelites, "who made the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies," Hosea vii. 3. It is therefore a detestable conduct of certain persons to excuse lies, which are told for the sake of profit or pleasure, when nevertheless all lies without distinction are hated, condemned and punished by God, Psalm v, 6. Prov. vi. 19. xii. 22. Eph. iv. 25. Col. iii. 9. "We may not speak wickedly nor deceitfully for God," as Job saith, Job xiii. 7. Shall we then do it for ourselves, or for our neighbour? "We must give an account of every idle word," Matt. xii. 36. If the saints did sometimes lie, as Abraham, Gen. xii. 13—19. Isaac, Gen. xxvi. 7. Jacob, Gen xxvii. 19. 34. the midwives in Egypt, Exod. i. 19, and others, we ought to censure, and not to imitate their conduct: the saints had also other infirmities, which ought not therefore to be approved of. Did Abraham say, that Sarah was his sister, it was also true, as he showeth, Gen. xx. 12. Did God bless the midwives in Egypt, it was not on account of their lies, but their godliness. And who can say that they did not speak the

truth, when they said, "the Hebrew women are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them?" Exod. i. 19.

Finally, this commandment forbids also 'deceit:" Not those wicked tricks and devices, whereby men abridge their neighbour of his property: for this belongs to the eighth commandment. Neither doth it forbid deceiving our enemy with military artifices: for we are not obliged to inform our enemy of our intention to annoy him. God himself instructed Israel in such military stratagems, and commanded them to make use of them, Joshua, viii. 2. We must not condemn employing a holy wisdom, in order to convert our neighbour by the word: Paul "being crafty, caught the Corinthians with guile," 2 Cor. xii. 16. Neither is it censurable to behave as strangers, and to appear unwilling, in order to try a person, and to discover whether he will perform his duty, as the angels tried Lot, and the Saviour his disciples, Gen. xix. 2. Luke xxiv. 28. 29. But the deceit that is spoken of here proceeds from a malicious desire to insnare and mislead our fellowmen, to their hurt. And this is done, (a) by treachery, whereby a person pretends to be friendly, while he harbours a malignant hatred in his heart, which disposeth him to destroy his neighbour: "they speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak," saith David, Psalm xii. 2. See also Psalm xxviii. 3. Such deceivers are Joabs and Judasses, who kissed their neighbours deceitfully, 2 Sam. ii 27. xx. 8—10. Matt. xxvi. 49. (b) By hypocrisy, whereby a person appears exceedingly devout externally, while his heart within is rotten, and all his designs are corrupt, as the Lord Jesus describes the hypocrites, Matt. xxiii. 27, and thus "men deceive themselves with vain imaginations," as James testifieth, James i. 22. The hypocrite is an abominable monster; for he lies even to the Lord, and to his Spirit, as if he would deceive the All-knowing. See Psalm lxxviii. 36. Acts v. 3. 4, 9. (c) It is deceit also to flatter, and soothe our neighbour by praising him and that often not according to truth; for we do thus deceive him: "A man that flattereth his neighbour, spreadeth a net for his feet," saith Solomon, Prov. xxix. 5. How detestable this is in preachers we may think and read, Isaiah iii. 12. Jer. vi. 14. xxiii. 14. (d) A person deceives not less by ambiguous words and mental reservations, which are usually called Mennonitish tricks. Of these we have spoken before upon the twenty-seventh Lord's day.

II. As no man is good, who only abstains from doing evil, but doth not do that which is good, therefore the Lord not only forbids

bearing false witness, but he also commands us to have a proper regard to the honour of our neighbour. To which pertains,

1. "That we love the truth." The Lord saith, "love the truth," Zech. viii. 19. "God desires truth in the inward parts," Psalm li. 6. We will never beware of bearing false witness, unless the truth be dear and lovely in our eyes.

2. We must also "speak the truth uprightly, and confess it." We must beware of every reservation, and of all ambiguity in our words, and with Paul, we must "renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness," 2 Cor. iv. 2, and with the citizens of Zion, we must "speak the truth in our hearts," according to Psalm xv. 2. We must especially speak the truth and confess it, when we are called upon to speak it, whether in judgment," as Jesus being adjured by Caiaphas, confessed that "he was the Christ, the Son of God," Matt. xxvi. 63, 64. or "in other dealings," when it may conduce to the advantage of our neighbour, and of the community: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear," saith Peter, 1 Peter iii. 15. Take heed nevertheless not to utter the whole truth without necessity. Solomon saith, Prov. xxix. 11, that "a fool uttereth all his mind" When Samuel came to Bethlehem, in order to offer a sacrifice to the Lord, and to anoint one of the sons of Jesse, he declared the first, but not the second reason of his coming, 1 Sam. xvi. 1—5. So Jeremiah also acted, telling a part of what had passed between him and the king, but not the whole, Jer. xxviii: 24—27.

3. It becomes us also to "defend and promote as much as we are able, the honour and good character of our neighbour." And therefore we must not lend an ear to backbiters; for if we do we lend our ear to the devil, as the backbiter doth his tongue. Do we hear aught to the disparagement of our neighbour, we must beware that we do not presently believe it, but we must defend our neighbour's honour, as much as we can and may: "Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction," This is enjoined even on the king, Prov. xxi. 8. Jonathan acted so in behalf of David, 1 Sam. xix. 45. xx. 32. And the princes and elders of the land conducted so toward Jeremiah, Jer. xxxvi. 16—24. Do we know aught that would disgrace our neighbour, we must not report it, but hold our peace; yea, though every one should know it, we must nevertheless not speak of it, that the evil report may be hushed, and the offence may gradually cease. Do we know any good of our neighbour, we ought to speak of it,

when we may excite others to imitate it, and when it may be serviceable to such a virtuous man, as one of Saul's young men said in commendation of David to his king, that "he was a cunning player, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and that the Lord was with him," 1 Sam. xvi. 18.

And what think ye, hearers, is not this command, which is given to the covenant people of God, a reasonable command? This command approves itself to every man's conscience to be holy, just and good. Would ye see the propriety of it, observe then,

1. That the Lord God, the only Lawgiver, who can save and destroy, to whom all the creatures, and still more his reasonable creatures, but most of all his covenant people are subject, is "the God of truth," Isaiah lxv. 16. Yea, he is the truth itself, Jer. x. 10, "he cannot lie," Tit. i. 2. Heb vi. 18. It is now surely proper, that his reasonable creatures, who were made after his image, and especially that his covenant people, who are renewed after his likeness, should be like him. The apostle might therefore reasonably exhort the Ephesians, "to put on the new man, which after God is created in true righteousness and holiness, or in the righteousness and holiness of the truth, and therefore to put away lying and to speak every man the truth to his neighbour," Eph. iv. 24, 25.

2. Bearing false witness is contrary to the nature of truth: it is violated, annihilated, banished out of the world, and even made a lie thereby. Is not this abominable? and if a person dare to do this, what other unbecoming actions will he not presume to do?

3. Is it not right, that the thoughts and words of a person should agree? Must not the person, who speaks falsehoods, silence his conscience, before he can abandon himself to bearing false witness? To excite such a strife between his heart and mouth is certainly unseemly. Will he who deceives his neighbour, endure to be deceived by him in such a manner? No man is willing to be called a false witness, or a liar; will he then be it? this is iniquity.

4. The person who transgresseth this commandment, destroys at the same time all human society; for he disturbs all love, sincerity, trust, confidence and good neighbourhood among friends and citizens. When the commonwealths of Israel and Judah hastened to their ruin, it was a forerunner of their dissolution, that "lying prevailed," Hosea iv. 2, and "that they could not trust a friend, nor put confidence in a guide, and that they were obliged to keep the doors of their mouths from her who lay in their bosom," Micha vii. 5.

5. "Lying and deceit," and whatever else belongs to bearing false witness, "are works of the devil." He forged the first lie, Gen. iii. 4. "He abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it;" thus speaks the mouth of truth concerning him, John viii. 44. Shall not a man then, yea, a believer avoid these abominations? If he do not, he declares himself to be a "child and of his father the devil, and that the lusts of his father he will do," according to the words of him who is true, John viii. 44.

6. Once more; he who defiles himself with this sin, "brings down upon himself the heavy wrath of God." Among "the six things which the Lord hateth, and the seven which are an abomination to him, are also a lying tongue, and a false witness that speaketh lies," according to Prov. vi. 16, 17, 19. "A false witness shall not be innocent, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape, but perish," saith the same wise man, Prov. xix. 5, 9. The Lord will punish such persons, until he hath destroyed them: "Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing," saith David to the Lord, Psalm v. 6. John teacheth, Rev. xxi. 8, that "liars have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."

APPLICATION.

But, friends, how is it with you in this respect? are ye entirely innocent of these transgressions? Ye will say no; "all men are liars." It is true, the word of God teaches us this, Psalm cxvi. 11. Rom. iii 4. But do ye believe this of yourselves, so that ye see it in your actions, and are ashamed of it? surely no; for if any person should look upon you as liars, and should tell you that he did, would it not provoke you to anger against him? who indeed will suffer such a reproach? Is it not then evident, that ye have not such an impression concerning yourselves, and that ye do not believe it? Ye believe that the word of God, which declares that all men are liars, is true, and that bearing false witness is a shameful sin, and deserves a severe punishment; and nevertheless when this matter is applied to you, ye then look upon yourselves to be honest persons, at least, your hearts are not broken on account of these sins. It is therefore not enough to know only from the word, that

we are called transgressors of this commandment, but we must also see it in ourselves, that we may be ashamed, concerned, and humbled on account of it. Therefore examine yourselves by what is forbidden and commanded here, and pause a while, until ye see the most, if not all these abominations in your minds and actions, and until this affects you thoroughly. Come, ye who have at any time acted as plaintiffs, as defendants, as witnesses, as lawyers and attorneys, or as judges in courts of judicature, have ye never borne witness to aught but the truth, and have ye always spoken the truth, without any clokes of shame? Yea, hear, all ye who hear me this day, are ye faithful in relating the words of another, forbearing either to add or diminish aught by your words or gestures? are ye strangers to backbiting, never bespattering your neighbour's skirts? do ye never defame, nor reproach him, either in his presence or absence? is your soul so filled with love to your neighbour, that ye do not suspect, nor judge him rashly or unheard? do ye shudder at every kind of lying and deceit? do ye love the truth? always speak and confess it with sincerity, when it is proper? and do ye do your utmost to defend the honour and good character of your neighbour? ye are then "perfect, since ye do not offend in word," according to James iii. 2. But friends, how can ye, and how can we believe this of you? your actions, words, and behaviour condemn you, and declare that ye bear false witness of yourselves. Your angry, raving thoughts concerning your neighbour; the pains, the grief, the sorrow and complaints of those who are condemned in courts of judicature; your prating the whole day long against your neighbour; all that discontent, and all those complaints, which we hear daily of the injuries which some suffer from their neighbour's tongues, manifest how abominable and guilty our people are before the Lord. We may indeed say now from Isaiah lix. 14, 15, "Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the Lord seeth it, and it displeaseth him." It would be your happiness, if ye also saw it, and that ye were wholly perverse, hateful and guilty before the Lord. O see with brokenness of heart, that your "throat is an open sepulchre, that ye have used deceit with your tongues, that the poison of asps is under your lips, and that your mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." It is so of a truth, whether ye know it or not. Paul, who was led by the Spirit of truth, accuseth you of this, Rom. iii. 13, 14.

Do ye see these things in yourselves with anxiety and concern, permit me to afford you my advice, in order that ye may escape the wrath to come, and may be delivered from your evil disposition.

1. Seek to obtain reconciliation for these iniquities of the Lord. His Son hath borne his wrath, and satisfied his justice for such transgressions, in behalf of those who flee for refuge to him. He himself bore the punishment of them, when he suffered false accusations, the falsifying of his words, backbiting, reproaches, unjust condemnations, with all sorts of lies and deceit. Yea, he purchased a perfect righteousness, which can entitle you to life, when, in obedience to his Father, he loved the truth, always spoke uprightly, and promoted in the most hearty manner his neighbour's honour. Seek then and receive by faith him and his righteousness, that with Paul ye may "be found in him, and may have his righteousness," Philip. iii. 7—10.

2. Seek another and a true temper of mind, that ye may love the truth, and may speak it upon every occasion: "God desireth truth in the inward parts," as David testifieth with truth, Psalm li. 6. Ye will never govern your tongues aright, until your minds are changed; "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," saith the Lord Jesus, Mat. xii. 34. But this can never happen, unless the Lord himself, who formeth the spirit of man within him, apply his hand effectually to the mind. As he alone wrote this command in tables of stone, so he also must write it in the heart, and thus, according to his promise, Isaiah lxi. 8. "direct our work in truth." As Moses then carried his tables of stone up to the Lord, that he might engrave his law in them, so do ye also commit your hearts into his hand, that he may form and dispose them according to his law, yea, that he may imprint his law in them, and that he may also direct your mouths according to it. David did so, when he said, Psalm xix. 14. "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord." See how he dreaded the sin of his tongue, and therefore prayed against it time after time, Psalm xxxix. 1. cxli. 3. Thus also Agur, the son of Jakeh did, Prov. xxx. 7, 8.

3. Let no man bear false witness against himself. A man hath none nearer to him than himself; and therefore it is much more preposterous in him to bear false witness against himself, than against his neighbour. This is nevertheless often done: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?" saith the Lord, Jer. xvii. 9. Therefore an unconverted person will often judge concerning himself, that he and his condi-

tion are good in the sight of God: "He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" Isaiah xliv. 20. Moreover, a believer, who hath yet but little experience, will sometimes judge, from a prejudice against himself, that he is in a graceless condition; but as it is on the one hand dangerous, so it is on the other exceedingly sinful to judge otherwise of ourselves, than God testifieth of us in his word.

4. Hate lies and deceit of every kind, be afraid of them, as of the proper works of the devil, and those by which we bring down the wrath of God upon us: "A righteous man hateth lying," saith Solomon, Prov. xiii. 5. He had also observed this in his father, who saith, Psalm, cxix. 104, "I hate every false way."

5. Beware of the causes of bearing false witness, as (a) discontent with your neighbour, by which men are easily urged to speak evil of their neighbour, and to hear it eagerly, with Saul, 1 Sam. xxiii. 7—19. xxiv. 10. (b) Great talkativeness: "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin," saith the wise king, Prov. x. 19. We must especially beware of idle talking and jesting: "Filthiness, and foolish talking, and jesting must not be once named among you," Eph. v. 4. (c) Watch particularly against your pride; for through pride we imagine that we know, and are able to say every thing better than others; "In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them," according to Prov. xiv. 3. (d) Watch also against a heart that is void of the Spirit; for when the heart is not filled with good things, the tongue must speak vanity: "Finally, brethren," saith Paul, Philip. iv. 8, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things," (e) Never think that your neighbour will keep aught to himself that ye have said to him: forbid him to speak of it again, and he will still mention it to another, and enjoin on him to keep it to himself, and it will thus pass from one to another, and often with many false additions. If ye be silent yourselves, another cannot bewray your secret: but after ye have once related it, ye are then no longer masters of your words. Therefore study to keep silence: "Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding," Prov. xvii. 28.

If we would conduct in this manner, what a harmonious friendship should we enjoy with ourselves, with men, and God! "What man

is he," saith David, Psalm xxxiv. 12, 13, "that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile." Hear what he saith to God, Psalm xv. 1, 3, "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour." Amen.

THE

TENTH COMMANDMENT

EXPLAINED.

XLIV. LORD'S DAY.

Exod. xx. 17. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

Q. 113. *What doth the tenth commandment require of us?*

A. That even the smallest inclination or thought contrary to any of God's commands, never rise in our hearts; but that at all times we hate all sin with our whole hearts, and delight in all righteousness.

Q. 114. *But can those who are converted to God, perfectly keep these commands?*

A. No; but even the holiest men, while in this life, have only small beginnings of this obedience, yet so, that with a sincere resolution, they begin to live, not only according to some, but all the commands of God.

Q. 115. *Why will God then have all the commands so strictly preached, since no man in this life can keep them?*

A. First, that all our lifetime, we may learn more and more to know our sinful nature, and thus become more earnest in seeking the remission of sin, and righteousness in Christ; likewise, that we constantly endeavour and pray to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we may become more and more conformable to the image of God, till we arrive at the perfection proposed to us in a life to come.

"I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad," saith David, Psalm cxix. 96 No visible things are so perfect, that they are eternal and incorruptible; "for the things which are seen are temporal," 2 Cor. iv. 18, nor are they so perfect that they have not their limits; they could otherwise afford human beings a perfect satisfaction, and would not be accompanied with any sorrow. Every man can see that they have their limits, and might be more perfect. Although a man should be ever so much enamoured of his prosperity, he will nevertheless experience at times an interruption of his pleasure. God alone is infinitely perfect, and since his law is an expression of his perfection, therefore his commandment is also exceedingly broad. He who meditates in it day and night will find continually more and more that there are unfathomable depths in it, his delight in it will not cease, nor be interrupted, but continually renewed. The sweet Psalmist hath shown this in the hundred and nineteenth psalm, his heart scarcely indites a single verse, but in order to express his pleasure in the commands of the Lord: for "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul, making wise the simple, and rejoicing the heart;" thus he speaks, Psalm xix. 7, 3. A man may find all that he must either believe or do in the law; it forbids all that is sinful; yea, like the whole word, Heb. iv. 12, the commandment is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," "The law is spiritual," saith Paul, Rom. vii. 14. It extendeth to the inmost desires of a man's spirit, when it saith, "Thou shalt not covet," &c.

If the Lawgiver had forbidden only murder, adultery, stealing, and bearing false witness, the sinner, who knows neither the corruption of his heart, nor the perfect holiness of God, would imagine that the outward observation of these commands would be sufficient: but the Lord prevents this, when he forbids in this commandment also the unholiness and sinful desires of his spirit.

The instructor proposes here two particulars for our consideration:

I. The nature of the tenth commandment, Question 113.

II. The end of the giving of the law, Question 114, 115.

1. The Lawgiver forbids "coveting our neighbour's house, wife, manservant, maidservant, ox, ass, and aught that is our neighbour's," or, belongs to him. A certain proof, that this commandment relates to loving our neighbour, and so belongs to the second table. Yet we need not scruple to refer it also to the first table, with the catechism, which saith, in order to explain this commandment, "that even the smallest inclination or thought contrary to any of God's commandments should never arise in our hearts," &c. Paul saith, Rom. xiii. 10, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Consequently the commands of the second table respect also the commands of the first, which belong also to the law, and are fulfilled by keeping the second table.

The Lawgiver saith twice, "Thou shalt not covet," once with respect to our neighbour's house, and again with respect to his wife. Surely not in order to give us here two distinct commands, as the Papists assert, which we refuted, when we divided the law into two tables, in treating on the 93d question: but the Lord repeats the word covet, in order to teach us, that it ought to be repeated before every object, which is exhibited here, and to manifest his earnestness in forbidding covetousness, that the person who is in covenant with him may beware of it the more. "Coveting." (or desiring) we know is that active power of the soul, which goeth forth with delight and inclination to that, which is represented by the understanding as good, whether it be a real, or an apparent good; for we cannot covet aught that is represented to us as evil, but we have an aversion from it. When now the Lawgiver saith, "thou shalt not covet," he speaks not then of a natural desire to necessary things; for he himself hath implanted such a desire in man for his wellbeing; much less doth he forbid a good desire of his favour and fellowship, since he commands this, Psalm lxxxi. 10, and will fulfil it, Isaiah lv. 1, but he forbids a sinful desire.

This sinful desire (or coveting) is "the smallest inclination or thought, which ariseth in our hearts, contrary to any of God's commandments," according to the explanation of the instructor, and it is thus the beginning of every sin, which is forbidden in the other commandments. Paul also teaches us this, when he saith, that "he was convinced by this tenth commandment of all his sins," Rom. vii. 7, 8. Thus also the Saviour teacheth, that "looking on a woman to lust after her, is committing adultery with her in our heart," Mat. v. 28. Achan was enticed by his lust to steal of that which

had been devoted, Joshua vii. 21. And so this commandment serves to explain the foregoing commandments, by teaching us, that God forbids not only the outward sinful actions, but even the desires of the soul to those sins.

But this commandment doubtless forbids also that which is not so particularly intended in the other commands, and that is "discontentment," whereby a person craves besides what he hath himself, and with which he ought to be contented, also the property of another, although not by unrighteous methods, and when he cannot obtain it so, is not satisfied; as Ahab coveted the vineyard of Naboth, and was willing to give him a better for it, or the value of it in money; but upon being refused, was displeased, 1 Kings xxi. 1—6.

But let us view this covetousness, which hath brought depravity into the world, near at hand, 1, with respect to its root, 2, with respect to its branches and fruits, and 3, with respect to the degrees of its growth.

The rootsin of covetousness is, (a) that the sinner lacks the all-sufficient God, who alone can fill and satisfy the heart fully: "He comes short of the glory of God by sin," Rom. iii. 23, and "is alienated from the life of God." Eph. iv. 18, whereby his soul, being like an empty vessel, seeks to be filled, and pants insatiably after all that appears to him honourable, pleasant and profitable. and so the sinner is like "a greedy dog, and he can never have enough," as the Lord speaks of the watchmen of his people, Isaiah lvi 11, 12. (b) Covetousness proceeds also from an irregular selflove, by which a person makes himself the only object of whatsoever he doth, and therefore endeavours to heap up for himself whatsoever appears to him desirable. The apostle teacheth that those, who are "lovers of themselves, are lovers of pleasures more than of God." 2 Tim. iii. 2, 4. (c) This root comprehends also pride, from which ariseth an imagination, that we deserve more than we have, yea, what our neighbour hath. It was this pride, which induced Absalom to covet his father's kingdom, 2 Sam. xv. 1, 6. (d) Earthly-mindedness excites also to sinful covetousness; for this renders a person so sottishly addicted to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, that he esteems his belly his God, places his glory in his shame, and minds only earthly things." See 1 John ii. 16, and Philip. iii. 19. It cannot be otherwise, but that these roots must bear many branches of gall and wormwood. For they excite the desires (a) to forbidden things, as Eve desired the fruit of the forbidden tree, Gen. iii. 6. (b) To indifferent and law-

ful things, but too immoderately and insatiably; men will have for instance too great a desire to eating and drinking, like "the riotous eaters of flesh, and the wine-bibbers," of whom Solomon speaks, Prov. xxiii 20; too immoderate a desire to marry, like Shechem, the son of Hamor, Gen. xxxv. 3—19; an impatient desire for children, like Rachel, Gen. xxx. 1; and an insatiable love of money, a desire to be rich, 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. (c) From these evil roots proceeds also a desire to good and divine things with an evil end, that we may obtain a name, and get gain by them, as Simon the sorcerer desired the gifts of the Spirit, Acts viii. 18, 19. See also James iv. 13.

These evil branches bring forth also many evil fruits. They are the causes of all other sins: "Every man," saith James, "is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin," James i. 14, 15. I will mention a few of these bitter fruits, as (a) sinful thoughts, which muse too long or unseasonably upon visible things; to which also belongs forming chimerical schemes or plans; for instance, the fool thinks through his covetousness, If I were but so wise, or so rich, or had such an office, then I would do this or that. Or a person muses upon sinful and abominable things, sometimes waking and sometimes also sleeping, suffering "vain thoughts to lodge within him," as the prophet complains, Jer. iv. 14. (b) Opposing, suppressing, and stifling the good motions, which the Holy Spirit excites in the conscience, that the sinner may oppose his covetousness, but he "quenches the Spirit," contrary to the admonition of Paul, 1 Thess. v. 19, and "his flesh lusteth against the Spirit," as the same apostle speaks Gal. v. 17. And because he cannot satisfy his lust, by obeying the Lord, therefore he resists the Lord; for "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," according to Rom. viii. 7. (c) Unthankfulness; doth God bestow good things upon him, he is not thankful, because he dotes upon the good things of others; he murmurs and frets against the Lord, because he may not have that which belongeth to his neighbour: "These," saith Jude in his epistle, vs. 16, "are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts." (d) It is also an evil fruit of covetousness, that men are urged by it to grudging and to other sordid vices, because they may not have what another hath; for "the works of the flesh are" not only "lasciviousness and idolatry," but also "witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, envyings, murders," as the apostle speaks, Gal v. 19—21.

But this covetousness doth not arrive to its full height and strength at once, but grows gradually.

1. Covetousness is a habit, and that foul source, or inherent original sin, from which every active desire that is sinful proceeds. The reason why "the wickedness of man is great in the earth is, that the imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually," as the Lord saith, Gen. vi. 5. "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts," &c. Matt. xv. 19, and "as a fountain casteth out her waters, so" the heart "casteth out its wickedness," Jer. vi. 7. This habitual covetousness is called by Paul, Rom. vii. 17, 18, 23, 26, "indwelling sin, the flesh the law of sin." That this habitual covetousness is also forbidden here is evident; for "the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart," 1 Tim. i. 5, and the law was given to mankind, when they were perfect.

2. From this proceeds that first ebullition and motion, which provokes to sin, while it is not approved, or followed with a contrivance to execute it, yea, is ever resisted and suppressed. The Papists, Socinians and Remonstrants deny that these first motions of lust are sins and forbidden, not only because they do not acknowledge original righteousness, but also because they must in this manner defend their vainglorious freewill, and the perfection of the saints; for they see indeed that they cannot prevent these ebullitions. But that these first motions are forbidden is evident, (a) from this tenth commandment, which doth not limit, but forbiddeth all covetousness. (b) Paul saith, Rom. vii. 7, "I had not known lust to be sin, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Did not he, who was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, know before his conversion, that lust to which we assent, and which we contrive how to execute, was sin? Even the heathens could know this. He speaks then of those emotions, that rise first of all. (c) This covetousness militates against perfect love, and against the Spirit, according to Matt. xxii. 37—40. Gal. v. 17. (d) according to the words of James, "a man is drawn away and enticed by his own lust, upon which lust conceiveth and bringeth forth sin," James i. 14, 15. What lust must we understand here, by that which draws away, entices and conceives but that first ebullition which draws away, entices and conceives by the pleasure that it takes in sin, and in contriving to execute it? It is true, this lust is distinguished from the sin that it conceives and brings forth; yet not in order to deny its sinfulness, but to distinguish a less from a greater sin, and to shew how a less sin brings forth a greater, as Paul also saith, that "sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in him all manner of concupiscence," Rom. vii. 8. That which brings forth sin is surely sin; for like brings forth like.

3. From this foul source, and from these sinful ebullitions proceeds also that assent to lust, by which we take a pleasure in it,

muse on it with delight, cherish it, and suffer ourselves to be urged to fulfil it, when we have an opportunity, and are able : and in this manner doth "lust conceive and bring forth sin," James i. 15.

2. When God forbids a sin, he then also commands the contrary virtue ; for we cannot avoid sin except by pursuing virtue, and therefore God commands here,

1. Regeneration after the image of God, inasmuch as this restrains and subdueth the strength of sinful concupiscence. Therefore the prophet saith, "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart," Jer. iv. 4. We "cast away our transgressions by making ourselves a new heart and a new spirit," as we read, Ezek. xviii. 31.

2. Satisfaction in God, whereby all our desires, being filled with him, are listless towards sin : "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee," saith Asaph to the Lord, Psalm lxxiii. 25. So Habakkuk also expresseth himself in his prophecy, ch. iii. 17, 18.

3. Contentment with that portion of earthly goods, which God bestows on us. Paul "having learned in whatsoever state he was, therewith to be content," Philip. iv. 11, exhorts others also "to be content with such things as they have," Heb. xiii. 5.

4. Joy and pleasure in our neighbour's welfare, so that we "rejoice with them who do rejoice," Rom. xii. 15.

5. Hatred and opposition to all that is sinful, by which we endeavour to subdue and mortify all our lusts, according to the admonition of the apostle, Col. iii. 5, for thus "we abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul," as Peter requireth, 1 Peter ii. 11.

6. An insatiable desire and active inclination to all righteousness, by which, with David and Paul, "we delight in the law and commandments of God, after the inner man," Psalm cxix. 47, 131. Rom. vii. 22.

3. The sinful heart will not submit to such a restraint, it imagines that this would be unreasonable. But this "commandment is holy, just and good," as Paul said of it, when he saw himself condemned by it, Rom. vii. 12. For (a) covetousness militates against the sovereignty of God over the heart. Therefore he also marks it strictly, and will judge it, according to Jer. xvii. 9, 10. Rom. ii. 16, and he requires that the person, who is in covenant with him, should be holy, as the Lord his God is holy, Lev. xix. 2. We must therefore "put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts : and be renewed in the spirit of our minds ; and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true

holiness," Eph. iv. 22—24 Yea, covetousness militates also against the providence of God, who gives to every man as much as he pleaseth. Therefore when God bestows any good thing upon our neighbour, and withholds it from us, "shall our eye be evil, because God is good," as the Saviour asks, disapproving of such a temper, Matt. xx. 15. (b) It is also vanity to be so intent upon earthly matters; for it is vain to rise up early, to sit up late, and to eat the bread of sorrow: for so he giveth his beloved sleep," Psalm cxxvii. 2. Neither can the capacious soul be satisfied with all these visible things; the round world cannot fill the triangular heart: "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing," saith the wise king, Eccl. i. 8. God alone is able to fill the rational soul, and to afford her a satisfying pleasure with his allsufficiency. See 2 Cor. ix. 8.

II We have thus explained the whole law: but we do still not understand it, if we do not rightly comprehend the end, for which the law was given. To what purpose then is the law? To teach us that man can keep it perfectly, after it is once become weak through the flesh? Paul denies this, when he saith, Gal. iii. 21, "If there had been a law given, which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." To explain this more particularly, we will, with the instructor, inquire, (1) whether those who are converted to God can keep the law perfectly, and if not, (2) why God suffers it to be preached to us so strictly.

We presuppose that man, before the fall was both obliged, and able to keep the law, in order to obtain life by his own righteousness; that since the fall, and since the upraising of the elect sinner, man is still obliged to keep the law perfectly; for he should otherwise not sin any more: neither can he ever be discharged from a perfect obligation to the Supreme Ruler, because as long as he is a creature, and the Lord is God, so long he is in every respect subject to God. We maintain also that the sinner, while in the state of nature, is wholly unable to do aught that is good, as we have shown on the eighth and ninth questions. But the subject of our present inquiry is, whether those who are converted to God can keep the law perfectly. We allow that believers possess, in consequence of their new birth, a certain ability for that which is good. We also acknowledge that they possess a certain perfection, not only with respect to justification, by which "they are perfect in Christ," as Paul saith, Col. ii. 10, but also with respect to sanctification, even a perfection of sincerity, and of parts, of soul and body, a perfect heart and "a sincere resolution to live, not only according to some, but

according to all the commands of God," as David and Hezekiah testify concerning themselves, Psalm cxix. 128. Isaiah xxxviii. 3. Moreover, one believer is said to be more perfect than another, on account of his greater proficiency: "Strong meat belongeth to them who are perfect,"* Heb. v. 14. But the question is, whether a believer can in this present life be perfect, with respect to degrees, and thus be wholly sinless. This is the doctrine of the Papists, Socinians and Remonstrants. They cannot otherwise maintain the doctrine of their indifferent freewill. Yea, the Papists conceive that they can be more than perfect by their works of supererogation: and the Socinians think that they can be more perfect than the law of Moses required, because they must now live according to the improved law of Christ; but we deny such a perfection of the saints. If those persons, who boast so much of their perfection, knew the unspotted holiness of God, and the spirituality of the law, and if they were only experimentally convinced with Paul by the tenth commandment, "that lust is sin," they would assent to the doctrine, that the saints cannot be perfect in this life. They ought at least to have learned better from the word of God: for that saith, (1) That all men, and therefore those also, who are converted to God, have sins: "There is no man who sinneth not," saith wise Solomon, 1 Kings viii. 46. Prov xx. 9. Eccl. vii. 20. "In many things we offend all," saith James in his epistle, chap. iii. 2, and John saith, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," 1 John i. 8. The most holy persons also acknowledge, that they are guilty of sin; see this in that most upright man Job, chap. ix. 2, 3—in the man after God's own heart, Psalm xix. 12. cxxx. 3. cxliii. 2, and in that highly enlightened apostle, Philip. iii. 12. (2) "The holiest men have but small beginnings of this perfect obedience." Paul and other great saints "knew and prophesied but in part," 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10. He and the holy Romans had only "the first-fruits of the Spirit," Rom. viii. 23. Now we know what a small beginning of the harvest the first-fruits are. (3) The most that the saints have is, that "with a sincere resolution they begin to live not only according to some, but according to all the commandments of God." See David's longing Psalm cxix. 5, and Paul's panting after perfection, Philip. iii. 12, 15. "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not," Rom. vii. 18. And what hindereth them from being perfect in this life? is it not their remaining corruptions and

* This is agreeable to the Dutch translation.

lusts, that "when they would do good, evil is present with them, and they are brought into captivity to the law of sin, which is in their members," Rom. vii. 21, 23. See how the same Paul speaks, Gal. v. 17.

When it is said, that the most holy persons, who have made a greater proficiency than others, "have only small beginnings of obedience to God," it doth not follow therefrom, that those who are least holy, and are nevertheless truly converted, have nothing at all of this obedience; for the most holy, when they are compared with the perfect demand of God's law, and the state of perfection after this life, cannot have more than such small beginnings; but if we compare them with those, who have made the least proficiency, then they are, as it were, perfect, and those least holy persons are like children, who are yet busy with first principles, according to Heb. v. 12—14.

We read indeed often of the saints, that "they walk with a perfect heart in all the commandments of the Lord blameless," as it is said of David, 1 Kings ix. 4. xiv. 8. Acts xiii. 22, and of Hezekiah, 2 Kings xviii 6, and of Zacharias, Luke i. 6. But the sins of those saints are too well known that we should conclude therefrom, that they had attained to a perfection of degrees. These phrases only intimate that they possessed a perfection of parts, which doth not exclude their stumblings. Though "Asa took not away the high places, and was guilty of other sins, nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days," 2 Chron. xv. 17. xvi. 2—12.

"Why then will God have the ten commandments so strictly preached, since no man in this life can keep them?" Thus asks the instructor from the mouth of our adversaries, who assert that the strict preaching of the law is an evidence, that we can keep it perfectly. Before we remove this difficulty, we say that the strict preaching of the law doth not consist in urging it as the condition of the covenant of works, that we may seek life by it, or as a special ministration of the Old Testament; for in this respect believers are "no longer under the law," Rom. vi. 14. Gal. iii. 25, and in this respect Christ hath fulfilled it for them, Rom. viii. 3, 4, but in seriously exhibiting it, as an everlasting rule of obedience, in all its extent, obligations, threatenings and promises. We may not preach the law thus, say the Antinomians. But Christ and his apostles preached it in this strict manner. Paul requires that Titus should "rebuke sharply and with all authority," Titus i. 13. ii. 15. We are, and always will remain obligated to obey God, on account of his sovereignty, and this everlasting obligation is rendered still

stronger by grace: "Christ," saith the apostle, Titus ii. 14, "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Ought not this obligation then to be urged, and therefore strictly preached?

But if the law must be preached so strictly, we must then be able to keep it perfectly, otherwise it will be in vain to preach it so strictly, say the patrons of the perfection of the saints. But no duty declares what we can, but what we ought to do, as we have shown upon the eighth and ninth question. And though God doth not require that the law should be preached strictly, because we can keep it, yet there are other reasons for this. It is proper to preach it strictly, in order to condemn and restrain the reprobates; "for whose sake the law was given," according to 1 Tim. i. 9, 10, and to convince the elect before they are converted in order to their conversion, and to urge them to the Mediator, Rom. iii. 20. x. 4. But besides this, the strict preaching of the law is serviceable to believers, (a) "That all their lifetime they may learn more and more to know their sinful nature." For they are by this mean humbled, and rendered capable of more grace, as the heart of Josiah became "tender," when the law was read to him, 2 Kings xxii. 11—22. (b) "That they may thus become the more earnest in seeking the remission of sins, and righteousness in Christ." For the law teacheth them the necessity of remission, and the gospel revealing Christ to them, they are urged to him. Paul, convinced of his condition by the law, cried out for deliverance through Christ, Rom. vii. 24. David did this before him, Psalm xxxii, li. (c) "That they may constantly endeavour and pray to God for his grace," &c. The law, when it is preached strictly, exhibits perfect holiness in all its lustre, and believers being in consequence of this, smitten with the love of it, "press after perfection," with Paul, Philip. iii. 12, 13, and pray earnestly for the grace of God, that he would cause them to keep his law. Hear what the great lover of the law saith to the Lord. Psalm cxix. 4, 5. "Thou hast commanded me to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes." We might assign other reasons for preaching the law strictly to believers, as, that they may thus see what Christ hath done for them; that the law is a rule of thankfulness to them, who are God's covenant people, and that the law is to them an evidence of the grace of God, since they have the law in their hearts, and they delight in it, and observe it: but we may not insist too long on these things.

APPLICATION.

So long, hearers, have ye heard the strict preaching of the law. But hath it answered these good purposes with you? Surely many of you have not yet been properly advantaged by it. It is evident; for

1. The most of you know not yet their sinful nature. Some know indeed that they have sinned; but do ye indeed see that your very nature is sinful, that ye are thoroughly leavened with sin, and that it is become, as it were, your second nature to sin? no, ye do not know your sinful lusting; ye think that if ye do not render yourselves guilty of gross sins, ye are already very virtuous; ye know not with an inward, experimental knowledge, that lust is sinful in you, although the law saith, "Thou shalt not covet," and ye dare think, yea, even say, that ye are not covetous, but content with your own. Why should we wonder, for ye never come to yourselves, and do not look to the bottom of your corrupt hearts, and thus "do not know the plague of your hearts," as is required, 1 Kings viii. 38.

2. Many sin and are careless, from an observation of the imperfections of the saints. What thinkest thou, O sinner, when thy lust enticeth thee to this and that sin, dost thou not then venture to commit it, because the saints defiled themselves with such sins? and when thy conscience reproves thee on account of thine abominations, dost thou not then flatter thyself that, since the saints obtained the forgiveness of their sins, thou also wilt obtain forgiveness? but do thy sins distress thee as much as the sins of the saints distressed them? and do they cause thee to seek with such earnestness, forgiveness and righteousness in Christ, and to fight and guard more earnestly through the grace of the Lord against sin, as the sins of the saints constrained them to do? See this in David and Josiah, Psalm li. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 19—27. And it is still baser, that many of you watch for the failings of the saints, in order to scoff at them, and to reproach them on account of their failings, with much sarcastic bitterness, both in their presence and absence: "men watch for their halting," as the prophet complains, Jer. xx. 10, "and when they halt, rejoice," as David experienced to his sorrow, Psalm xxxv. 15. But if ye knew their distress on account of their halting, ye would not add to their sorrow. David had therefore reason to say to the Lord, Psalm xxxviii. 16, 17. "Lest they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against

me. For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me."

3. There are few who make a right use of the preaching of the law; for some cannot and will not hear the strict preaching of the law, they cannot endure that probing of their hearts, and it provokes them to indignation against the preacher of the law. Is it not true? will ye not hate him, speak evil of him, depart from him, and turn away your ears, while he preaches, from hearing the law? The surly temper of God's ancient people prevails also in many of you. See this wickedness detected and threatened, Isaiah xxx. 9—14. lix. Amos v. 10. Others are better pleased with the preaching of the law: they hear willingly a wise reprover, and even say that he cannot preach too sharply; but they do not proceed any further. Some of you are indeed at times alarmed, and are afraid with Felix; but ye seek to divert it, as he did, Acts xxiv. 25, or are with "Agrippa almost persuaded to become Christians," Acts xxvi. 28, but this is all that comes of it; and if it produce any effect, it will not induce you to seek with restlessness, pardon and righteousness in Christ; this ye neglect; but endeavour to amend in some measure your evil doings; and when ye advance a little therein, ye think that God will overlook all your shortcomings, as weaknesses: and ye have thus, like the Jews, "a zeal for God; but not according to knowledge: for ye are ignorant of God's righteousness, and go about to establish your own righteousness: and do not thus submit yourselves to the righteousness of God," Rom. x. 2, 3. For ye seek not your salvation and rest in "Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," vs. 4, but in your own doings.

Therefore all that ye have heard so long a time, of the law, hath been unprofitable, and of no service to you. And consequently the whole law, with all its commands and threatenings, is yet against you, and ye lie under the curse of the law, which is denounced against the transgressors, Gal. iii. 10, 12, and ye never will, while ye remain in your present condition, surmount it; "for God will by no means clear the guilty." Exod. xxxiv. 7, and ye are guilty before him. Will ye flee from the wrath to come, flee then to the Son of God, in order to obtain in him grace and mercy of the Lord; "for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," Rom. x. 4.

But ye, O believers must also still make use of the law, though ye are not any longer under the law, but under grace, and the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in you through the satisfaction of

Christ; for the law must yet be strictly preached to you also. Therefore,

1. Exercise yourselves yet daily in seeking a knowledge of your sins, that ye may become more and more acquainted with your sinful nature. When God began to lay his good hand on you, in order to convert you, he discovered to you indeed your abominableness and guilt, yet he discovered it only in part; but now ye must behold still greater abominations. Therefore examine yourselves often by the law, and compare yourselves with all that is commanded and forbidden in it; give strict heed to your heart, and observe what enters in, and what goeth out of it, and whither it would mislead you, if the Lord did not restrain you by his grace, yea, how often it actually seduces you, against your sincere and determined resolution. Descend often into yourselves, that ye may see that filthy bottom, and your concupiscence, as the first headspring of your sinful nature, and how that sinful nature becomes active, when the hatefulness of sin is exhibited by a prohibition of it. Paul learned to know his sinful nature in this manner; for he saith, Rom. vii. 8 11, 13. "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence, deceived me, and by it slew me. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin was made death to me, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."

2. Beware that your sight of your sinful nature, and your sorrow for it do not render you impatient, and fretful and that it do not discourage you. It hath pleased the Lord to leave these corruptions, as thorns in your eyes, and as goads in your sides, in order to humble you, that ye may not be exalted on account of the excellency of the revelation; that Christ may remain precious to you, and that he may induce you to seek his righteousness continually; and also that he may cause you to be to the glory of his wisdom, power and goodness, since he is able to lead you in such a sinful way to salvation. He chooses to render you earnestly desirous of the perfect state in heaven; also to retain you in a state of warfare, that he may render you conquerors, and may crown you after your work is finished. Exercise yourselves then in these things, and continue engaged in them.

3. Beware of reproaching and despising others, who are beset with infirmities, on account of their stumblings. Ye know how your own sins grieve you; think not that other godly persons take pleasure in theirs: "Brethren," saith the apostle, Gal. vi. 1, "if a

man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

4. Pursue after perfection, though ye cannot be perfect. To indulge without restraint in sin, or to be discouraged, because we cannot attain to perfection is not the conduct of tender Christians; for they rather "reach forth to it," with Paul, Philip iii. 12—14. If we will be in earnest, we will attain to perfection after this life, yea, in this life we may always become more perfect than we are.

5. Every believer should endeavour to labour and advance according to his proficiency. As the man is, so is his strength. A child, a youth, and a man in Christ must each conduct according to, and not above his strength, that he may not overtoil himself. This the apostle requireth, Philip. iii. 15, 16.

Thus the law will not be a terror to you: "The law is not against such persons, and it was not made for righteous persons," as the apostle saith, Gal. v. 23. 1 Tim. i. 9. Your endeavours and imperfect obedience, O believers, will still be acceptable to God: "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted, according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not," saith Paul, 2 Cor. viii 12. Having such a perfect heart, ye will be imboldened to say with Hezekiah to the Lord in the hour of death, "Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight," Isaiah xxxviii. 3. It is true, your lusts and imperfections do still afflict you, but they will soon be abolished, and your Head and Husband Christ, "will present you to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but holy and without blemish." Thus speaks Paul, Eph. v. 27. "And let all the people say Amen, yea, Amen."

THE WORK

OF

CHRISTIAN PRAYER.

XLV. LORD'S DAY.

Philip. iv. 6. Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

Q. 116. *Why is prayer necessary for Christians?*

A. Because it is that chief part of thankfulness which God requires of us; and also because God will give his grace and Holy Spirit to those only, who with sincere desires continually ask them of him, and are thankful for them.

Q. 117. *What are the requisites of that prayer, which is acceptable to God, and which he will hear?*

A. First, that we from the heart pray to the one true God only who has manifested himself in his word; for all things he hath commanded us to ask of him; secondly, that we rightly and thoroughly know our need and misery that so we may deeply humble ourselves in the presence of his divine majesty: thirdly, that we may be fully

persuaded, that he, notwithstanding we are unworthy of it, will for the sake of Christ our Lord, certainly hear our prayer, as he has promised us in his word.

Q. 118. *What hath God commanded us to ask of him?*

A. All things necessary for soul and body: which Christ our Lord has comprised in that prayer he himself has taught us.

Q. 119. *What are the words of that prayer?*

A. "Our father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,"

WHEN God commands his children pray. "Lord, thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!" saith David, Psalm cxix. 4, 5. Thus Augustin also acted, when he prayed to God, saying, "Give me what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt, and thou shalt not command in vain." They esteem all God's commandments, and the whole law to be "holy, just and good," with Paul, Rom. vii. 12. They have an earnest inclination, and an insatiable desire to keep the commandments: "I opened my mouth, and panted; for I longed for thy commandments," saith that godly king, Psalm cxix. 131. They are exceedingly fearful and afraid of transgressing the law of the Lord, and they beseech him therefore to keep them from transgressing it, as the same man speaks, Psalm xix. 13. "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me." And Psalm cxix. 10, "With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments." They cannot indeed preserve themselves, and they know by experience that they cannot keep the precepts of the Lord perfectly, though they esteem them so highly, and do so earnestly desire to keep them. But knowing the covenant promise of the Lord, that "he will cause them to walk in his statutes, and to keep his judgments and do them," according to Ezek. xxxvi. 27, therefore they apply to him in prayer, that he may perfect his promised strength in their weakness. I will adduce once more David's petition, as a proof of these observations: "Teach me," saith he, Psalm lxxxvi. 11, "O Lord, thy way. I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name." In this way doth the instructor also proceed; for when he would excite us to good works, as fruits of thankfulness, he taught us (1) The necessity of those works, in the xxxii. Lord's day. (2) The principle of them, to wit, conversion, Question 89—90. (3) The nature of them,

Question 91. (4) The rule of good works, Lord's days xxxiv—xliv. and now (5) Prayer, as a mean to assist us in doing good works; for having shown that even those who are converted cannot keep the law perfectly, and that they are therefore taught to pray unto God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that they may be more and more renewed after the image of God, until they attain to the perfection, which hath been exhibited, after this life, Question 114, 115. We say, having shown this, he proceeds to an explanation of prayer.

Three particulars require our consideration here,

I. The nature.

II. The pattern, and

III. The necessity of prayer.

I. Before we exhibit the proper work of prayer, we must speak of certain particulars, which are previously required to prayer, with respect to him, to whom we must pray, to the person who prays, the things for which he must pray, and the disposition of mind with which he must pray.

We must pray to "none but the one true God, who hath manifested himself in his word." The Lord Jesus teacheth us this, when he saith, Matt. iv. 10, "The Lord thy God shalt thou worship, and him only shalt thou serve." Prayer is indeed a religious work, by which we acknowledge and honour God, as the most high, and infinitely perfect, as they who overcame the beast honoured the Lord with the song of Moses, saying, Rev. xv. 4, "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee." He to whom we shall pray must be allsufficient, that he may be able to help; and allknowing, that he may know the thoughts, and hear the words of him who prayeth, afar off; and infinitely good, that he may be willing to help the needy and unworthy sinner; and so he must be "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," Eph. iii. 20. The Papists, when they pray to the saints and other creatures, and the Socinians, when they pray to Christ, whom they esteem to be but a mere man, are guilty of idolatry, as we have proved upon the first commandment. And we must pray to God, as he hath manifested himself in his word; for otherwise we "worship we know not what," with the Samaritans, John iv. 22, and we "serve an unknown God," like the Athenians, Acts xvii. 23. Since now the Lord God hath manifested himself in his word, as the Triune Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, therefore we must pray to him as such, and with such a becoming apprehension of him; for God

cannot draw near to the sinner with his grace, neither can the sinner draw near to God with his prayers in any other way. That the Son and the Holy Ghost are God, coessential with the Father, and that we must therefore pray to them also, these are particulars which we have proved upon the thirteenth and twentieth Lord's days. Inasmuch now as the Triune God hath revealed himself by a special œconomy of grace, in which the Father comes with his favour to the sinner, through the Son and through the Holy Ghost, therefore we must also come by the operation of the Holy Ghost through the Son to the Father, and end in him with our prayers: "Through Christ we have an access by one Spirit unto the Father," according to Eph. ii. 18.

Irrational creatures are sometimes said to pray to God: "The young ravens, and the beasts of the field cry, and call mightily to God," Job xxxviii. 41. Joel i. 20. Jonah iii. 8. This is however not praying in the proper sense of the word, but it only intimates their danger and distress: but praying is the work of men, who can draw nigh to God, and present their requests to him in a rational manner. And prayer is especially the work of believers, who are reconciled to God, have an access to him, partake of the Spirit of grace and of prayer, and are acceptable to God with their prayers; "God had respect unto Abel, and then also to his offering: but unto Cain he had not respect, and then not to his offering neither," Gen. iv. 45. "We know," said the man, who was born blind, John ix. 31, "that God heareth not sinners; but if a man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth." James saith of no other, but "the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man, that it availeth much," James v. 17. The sinner, who is in his natural state, is obliged to pray on account of the supremacy of God, and his own dependance; but he is not able to pray aright: "his prayer becomes sin to him," Psalm cix. 7. The Lord God "hides his eyes, and shuts his ears" to the prayer of such a sinner, Isaiah i. 15. And since he hath never embraced the beloved Son of God, in whom he is well pleased, therefore he cannot, and may not approach the Lord, as his reconciled God, who is a consuming fire to him. Shall such an one then forbear to pray? God forbid. "The ploughing of the wicked is sin," saith Solomon, Prov. xxi. 4. May or shall they then forbear to plough? surely no; but the unconverted sinner must see that it is his duty to pray, that he may be concerned, and may from concern flee to the Mediator, upon the call of the gospel; for he should thus obtain freedom, and an ability to pray well. But if he will persist in sinning, of what advantage will his praying be

to him? If he will "confess and forsake his sins, he will obtain mercy," according to Prov. xxvi. 13.

Man is exceedingly needy. He is destitute of every thing, he possesseth nothing in himself, that can afford him satisfaction, but he must seek all things out of himself from the Lord by prayer. Yet he may not pray for all that he can desire, as that which opposeth the decree of God, and his revealed will, that all men may be saved, that he himself may be perfect in this life, and that he may obtain such and such things, in order to commit sin with them, or to consume them upon his lusts. This would be making a mock of God, as we do of men; but we must pray "for all things that he hath commanded us to ask of him." These all things are "all things necessary for soul and body." The things necessary for the soul are pardon of sin, sanctification, assurance, strength, preservation, and an increase of all grace. The saints prayed for these things, as we see particularly in David, and especially in the fifty-first Psalm. The things which are necessary for the body are health, meat, drink, clothing, and all that can conduce to the welfare of the body. We may, and ought to pray for these things, because we depend upon God, according to the body also: but to covet with an evil covetousness for our house, in order that we may set our nest on high, and to desire to be rich, is shameful and unjust; if we have food and raiment, we ought therewith to be content. And therefore we may pray against riches, as well as against poverty, and desire of God only "the food that is convenient for us," as Agur the son of Jakeh did, Prov. xxx. 8. We ought also to take good heed, that we pray (a) more for the things that are necessary for the soul, than for those that are necessary for the body, Matt. vi. 33. John vi. 37. (b) More for things that relate to God, than for those that relate to ourselves: see this in the Lord's prayer. (c) More against sin, than against chastisement, Lam. iii. 39. (d) We must pray for grace with respect to the essence of it absolutely: but for grace with respect to the increase and degrees of it, as also for things which concern the body, we must pray conditionally, to wit, if they will promote the honour and worship of the Lord, and will contribute to the furtherance of our salvation.

It is necessary, that the mind should be well disposed, in order that we may pray in such a manner, as is acceptable to God, and that he may hear us. (a) The mind must know through the Spirit the one true God, who hath revealed himself in his word, from that word, in all his adorable perfections, that the soul, affected with lively apprehensions and contemplations of God, to whom she speaks,

may possess and be actuated with reverence and a believing confidence in prayer. The saints have for this purpose, when they prayed, employed in their addresses such honourable titles of God, as inspired them with a profound reverence for him, and nevertheless encouraged them to desire and expect good things of him. See this in the prayer of Moses, Numb. xxiii. 16, 17, of those who returned from Babylon, Neh. ix. 1—26, of Jeremiah chap. xxxii. 17, 18, of Daniel, chap. ix. 5, of the first Christian church, Acts iv. 24—26. We ought not therefore to approve of uttering without any impression, and hastily the first word that occurs concerning God. (b) Our minds must also be rightly affected with respect to ourselves, and the things, for which we are about to pray. We cannot pray as we ought, unless "we rightly and thoroughly know our need and misery." Our hearts must be deeply sensible of what we need, of the misery to which we are subject, that we are unworthy of, and have forfeited all things, that the soul, urged by her need, may humbly prostrate herself before the Lord, and may seek his grace. It is not enough to pray for things that are needful, but we must also have a deep sense of our need of them, that our need may urge us to pray: "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee," saith the Lord, Psalm l. 15. "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him; and saved him out of all his troubles," saith David, Psalm xxxiv. 6. He saith concerning himself to the Lord, Psalm lxi. 2, "From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed." See the prayer of the church, Psaml cii. 1. (c) The mind of the person who prayeth must also undoubtedly desire the good things for which he prays. Only to mention desirable things, and not to desire them, but to be heartless, indifferent and listless, when we pray, is just as though we said, I do not wish that God should grant me my petition. When David prayed to the Lord, his soul was like "a panting hart, and a land, in which there was no water," Psalm xlii. 1, 2. lxiii. 1. cxliii. 6. Therefore prayer is sometimes called "a cry," Psalm v. 2. Lam. iii. 8.

When the mind is so disposed, it is prepared for "prayer, by which we address God, make our needs and desires known to him, and request of him all things necessary for soul and body, with humility and believing confidence, in the name of Christ, with a trust, that we shall be heard, with thanksgiving, and with an intense earnestness, in spirit and in truth."

It is necessary to describe prayer agreeably to this representation somewhat more particularly.

1. We say that prayer is "an address to God." The natural

man, when he prays after his fashion, speaks only to the air: "He draws near to God with his mouth, and honours him with his lips, but removes his heart far from him," Isaiah xxix. 13. But the true supplicant "seeks unto God, and unto God he commits his cause," as Eliphaz adviseth, Job v. 8. He lifts up his heart to heaven, presents himself before the Lord, treats with him, and speaks to him: "Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens," saith the complaining and praying church, Lam. iii. 41. David's psalm of prayer begins thus, "Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul," Psalm xxv. 1. Hear how Job sighs, "O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him," Job xxiii. 3, 4. We make this address either with our heart only, by ejaculatory prayers, like Moses, who though he did not speak one word, nevertheless "cried to God," Exod. xiv. 15, and like Nehemiah, who "prayed to the God of heaven," while he spake with the king, "when the king said to him, For what dost thou make thy request," Neh. ii. 4. Or with our mouth, either whispering, like "Hannah, who spake in her heart, only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard." 1 Sam. i. 13, or with an audible voice, by which we excite our attention, and are preserved from wandering thoughts. When we pray alone, we must be able to hear ourselves, but we must not then be heard by others, that they may not suspect us of hypocrisy; for why else do we "we enter into our closets," but that we may "pray in secret to God," according to the command of our Saviour, Matt. vi. 6. But when we pray, as leaders in prayer, with others, we must then raise our voice so high, that every one may hear it, like the Levites, Neh. ix. 4. But to pray in the presence of others, as leaders of prayer, in an unknown tongue, is the work of the "Barbarian and mad" Papists. How can the people unite with us, when we pray so, and say Amen to what they do not understand? See what Paul saith against this, 1 Cor. xiv. 1—23. To excuse this irregularity by saying that God understands such a strange language, is absurd: for it would then be the same whether a man or a parrot prayed. "We must pray with our understanding," as the apostle required, 1 Cor. xiv. 15. Neither is it proper to mutter every word after the person, who is the leader of prayer; we need only give heed to what is uttered, and take care that our hearts accompany with their desires the words of the prayer, and that we confirm it with our Amen, as all the people said Amen upon David's psalm, 1 Chron. xvi. 36. We read, Neh. viii. 6, that Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God; and all the people answered, Amen, Amen,

with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground."

2. The person who prays in faith "makes with his address his need and desires known unto God." "In every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God," saith the text. He shows God what afflicts him, and what his condition requires, from what evil he wishes to be delivered, and what good he wishes to enjoy; and therefore he sends up his groanings and desires to God: "Lord, all my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee," saith David, Psalm xxxviii. 9. "He declares his ways unto God, and is heard," Psalm cxix. 26. The prophet saith to the Lord concerning the righteous, Isaiah xxvi. 16. "Lord in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer, when thy chastening was upon them." The Lord knows indeed the needs and desires of those whom he loves; but he chooseth nevertheless that they should complain of them, and propose them to him, that it may appear, that they also know them, that they are affected with them, and earnestly desirous of his favour; for this is acceptable to him. "Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice and thy countenance is comely," saith Jesus to his dove, Song ii. 14.

3. But the most essential requisite of prayer is the request, which we make to God in praying. The need of the soul constrains her to seek deliverance, and her desire urgeth her to obtain that which is good, and to request of the Lord to bestow it. As God describes prayer by requesting that which is good of him, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. "Daniel desired that his companions would request mercies of the God of heaven." Dan. ii. 18. Which request earnest petitioners urge vehemently with the Lord God, by a persevering cleaving to the Lord, and "wrestling" with him, not being able to desist, "until he hath blessed them," like Jacob, Gen xxxii. 24—26, and by a continual uplifting of their hearts and enforcing of their words in their request, that they may importune him to grant their request, like Daniel, "O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord, hearken and do, defer not," Dan. ix 19, and also by vehement motives, derived, one while from his honour, which will be manifested thereby, like the church, Psalm lxxix. 9, "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name, and deliver us, and purge away our sins for thy name's sake:" another while from his promise, like Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 11, 12. "Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau. And thou saidest, I will surely do thee good," &c. Yea, such a petitioner will derive his motives

also from the malice and power of his enemies, from the providence of God, who hath brought him into such a situation, from the intensity of his desire, which God himself hath wrought in him, and from the greatness of his distress, rendered more grievous by his sins; "Pardon mine iniquity; for it is great," saith David, Psalm xxv. 11. If our prayer shall be acceptable to God, it must possess such qualifications and properties, as are acceptable to him, and it must therefore be made,

1. "With humility." We must "humble ourselves deeply in the presence of the divine Majesty." The person who prays aright beholds the exalted dignity of God, and he sees his own meanness, nothingness, neediness, filthy sinfulness and impotence. This excites a holy awe for the Lord in his soul, it causeth him to abase and abhor himself, and it teaches him to desire all things of grace, and to submit patiently to the wise, righteous, and sovereign disposal of God, with respect to the measure, the time and the place of the fulfilment of his desire. See this in Abraham, Gen. xviii. in Job. ch. xlii. 5, 6, in David, Psalm cxxxi. in Isaiah, ch. vi. 5, in Daniel, ch. ix. and most emphatically in "the publican, who standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner," Luke xviii. 13.

2. But although the praying soul humbles herself so much, she is nevertheless not diffident, but "goes with" a believing confidence to the throne of grace, that she may obtain mercy, and find grace to help her in time of need," Heb iv. 16. x. 19—22. Her need urges her: the command of God to call on him constrains her, so that she dares not forbear: his call, his promises, that he will hear, and the satisfaction of Christ allure the soul; and "the Spirit" of the Lord "leads" her, and effects "an access for her to the Father," Eph. ii. 18. Yea, "he causes her to cry, and cries also in her, Abba, Father," Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 6.

3. But how can he, who contemplates the highness of God, and his own odiousness and nothingness, come boldly before the Lord, and bow down before the high God? He comes in the name of Christ. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do," saith he, John xiv. 13, 14. The name of Jesus denotes not only his proper name and his titles, Mat. i. 21, Isaiah ix. 5, but also his person, as God and man, and as Mediator, John i. 12, his merits, 1 Cor. vi. 11, his charge and command, 2 Thess. iii. 6, and thus also his power and strength, Acts iii. 16. To pray in his name, signifies in general, to go through him unto God, and to request all things of

him for Christ's sake. By him we have also an access to the Father, according to the words of Christ and of his apostle, John xiv. 6. Eph. ii. 18. But we pray especially in the name of Christ, when we (a) draw near with boldness, relying upon the right which we have in him, and in his name: "In him we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him," saith Paul, Eph. iii. 12. (b) When we lay hold on him and on his merits by an active faith, unite ourselves to him, and in this manner come with him to the throne, and refer the Father to Jesus in all that we request, that we may be acceptable in him, and may request and obtain all things for his sake. Therefore the Saviour saith, John xvi. 23. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." (c) We also pray in his name, when we draw near and offer up our petitions to God upon his command and encouragement. We come then, as sent by him; for he saith, Mat. vii. 7, "Ask, and it shall be given you," &c. (d) Also when we apply to the Father upon the foundation of his merits for all that grace, which he hath purchased, and plead thereupon before his throne, "with the answer of a good conscience," 1 Peter iii. 21. (e) And we pray not less in his name, when we are influenced by his power and Spirit, while we draw near to God, and request all things of him. It is "by the Spirit," that we go through Christ to the Father, Eph. ii. 18. (f) Once more; we pray in his name, when we request aught for his sake; as Daniel prayed "for the Lord's sake," Dan. ix. 17. Jesus desires by his intercession with the Father, that he would hear and show favour to his delivered, as he declares, John xvii. To apply then to the Father upon the foundation of the will and of the intercession of Christ is praying in his name. (g) Finally, we do this, when we commit our prayers into the hands of the Advocate, that he may present them with his intercession to the Father. See him engaged in this work, Rev. viii. 3, 4.

4. The believer, praying thus in the name of Christ, "trusts also that God will certainly hear his prayer, although he is unworthy of it." God hears prayer according to Psalm lxv. 2. And he doth this sometimes by granting that for which we pray: "Jabez, who was more honourable than his brethren, called on the God of Israel, saying, O that thou wouldest bless me indeed, &c. And God granted him his request," 1 Chron. iv. 9, 10. He doth this, either presently, as upon the prayer of Elijah fire fell presently from heaven, and consumed his sacrifice, 1 Kings xviii. 36—38, or some time after. Abraham prayed for a son, and God promised him one, when he was seventy-five years old; but he did not obtain him, be-

fore he was an hundred years old, according to Gen. xii. 1—14. xv 2. xxi. 5. Sometimes God gives upon our praying that which is better than what we desire. Abraham prayed that Ishmael, the son whom he had by his bondmaid, might live before God, as the promised seed; but the Lord promised him that which was better, namely, Isaac, a son of his proper wife, Gen. xvii. 18, 19. But sometimes God denies that which a person desires, and yet causes the soul to acquiesce in the denial, and to be satisfied with it, by affording her an abundant influence of grace. Paul "prayed thrice to be delivered from the buffetings of Satan;" but it did not please the Lord to grant him his request, "but he said, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Paul acquiesced in this, and was satisfied, saying, "Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me," 2 Cor. xii. 7—10. It is necessary to confide that God will assuredly hear the person who prays believingly, either in one way, or another: therefore the apostle James saith, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given to him: but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering," &c. James i. 5, 6. "Whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them," saith the Saviour, Mark xi. 24. The person who calls on the name of God hath indeed a sure foundation of trust in the power, wisdom and goodness of God, and in the merits, intercession and promise of Christ. Doth any one ask, How can I know that God heareth my prayer, when he doth not presently grant me my desire upon my petition? It is certain, that God hears our prayer, when we pray according to his will: "This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us," saith the best beloved disciple of Jesus, 1 John v. 14. The Lord also sometimes assures his praying people by his spirit, that he hears them, and particularly, (a) when he affords them a ready and free access to him; for he shows then that his ears are open to the prayer of faith; when it is otherwise, "he covers himself with a cloud, that their prayer may not pass through," Lam. iii. 44. (b) When he gives the person who prays the spirit of prayer, so that he prays heartily, copiously, and with perseverance. This is an evidence, that he will hear our prayer; for the apostle teacheth us this, Rom. viii. 26, 27. (c) Sometimes the Lord shows the soul, that he is pleased with her prayer, he nods, as it were, to her, and grants her rest, peace, confidence, and an expectation that he will fulfill her desire, so that she must say with the

church, "I will look unto the Lord: I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me," Micha vii. 7. (d) But the soul becomes most clearly persuaded, that her petition is heard, when God secretly speaks and saith to the soul, Be of good cheer, "I will do this same thing also of which thou hast spoken." See Exod. xxxiii. 17. Isaiah xxxviii. 5.

5. According to the text, we must "make our request known to God by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving." It is also proper, that he who requests and obtains aught of God, should cheerfully acknowledge it, and give him the honour of it. It is true, that as long as we have not obtained our request, or the evidence that we are heard, we cannot thank the Lord for it. The praying soul hath nevertheless sufficient cause to thank the Lord. She must praise the glory of the Lord: former benefits must be acknowledged; and her happiness, that she may draw near to him, may obtain the Spirit of prayer, and trust that she will be heard, must surely cause her to honour the Lord.

6. But shall we do this great work remissly and carelessly? no, it must be done with "intense earnestness." It was foretold of Christians, that they should be "earnest supplicants," Zeph. iii. 10. They are exceedingly desirous of the fulfilment of their request; and this renders them vehemently and perseveringly earnest to obtain it: "Continue instant in prayer," thus Paul admonisheth, Coll. iv. 2. And therefore their souls are actively intent with respect to God, to themselves, their request, faith and trust, and they also attend to the manner in which the Lord will conduct toward them, whether their prayer will be acceptable to him, or whether he will oppose them: and so they "watch to see what he will say unto them," Hab. ii. 1. "Satan indeed stands at the right hand" of the person who prays, "when he stands before the Lord" with his petitions, "that he may resist him," and may suggest every discouragement to the soul. See this, Zech. iii. 1, 2. But the earnest supplicant will not become remiss on this account but will call upon God with greater zeal, and with more vehemence, like his Saviour, "who, being in an agony, prayed more earnestly," Luke xxii. 44.

7. This earnestness is nevertheless not a mere noise, neither is it effected "by our power and might, but by the Spirit of the Lord," Zech. iv. 6. For "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth," as Jesus saith, John iv. 24. And therefore we must pray to him with our spirits, and with the inmost emotions of our souls, and so also in truth and uprightness. We must draw near with a true heart, Heb. x. 22. But to

pray in spirit and in truth denotes also to pray without being confined by God to any place of prayer, as the church of the Old Testament was limited with her solemn prayers to Jerusalem. See John iv. 20—24.

8. Although we must pray with the spirit, nevertheless the body, which is the Lord's, must also be active in this work with such gestures, as manifest a becoming sense, and reverence for God, and express the praying posture of the soul. Whether in grievous distress we "fall with our faces to the earth," like Joshua, Joshua vii. 6; or whether from reverence we "bow down and kneel," with the church, Psalm xcv. 6; or to manifest our confidence, and readiness to serve, we "stand," with Abraham, Gen. xviii. 22, 23. We must also "lift up our hands with our hearts unto heaven," as the church would do, Lam. iii. 41. And we must "lift up our eyes to heaven," with Jesus, John xvii. 1, or to testify our unworthiness, we must cast them down with the publican, Luke xviii. 13.

II. There is no work, for which we are less qualified, than praying in a suitable manner to the Lord. The apostles were conscious of this, and therefore said to their Master, "Lord teach us to pray. And he said unto them, After this manner pray ye, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name," &c. Matt. vi. 9—13. Luke xi. 1—4. Of which pattern of prayer we may say with propriety, that Christ gave it, that we might offer up our desires to God with the selfsame words; for he puts the words into our mouths. After the same manner the prophet saith to Israel, Hosea xiv. 2, 3, "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously," &c. But no person will admit that we ought always to make use of this pattern, and of no other, when we pray. We do not read that the apostles ever used this pattern word for word, when they prayed: we therefore conceive that the principle design of Jesus was to teach believers for what things, and in what manner they ought to pray. And this pattern is also a most perfect model of a well ordered prayer; for we have here, (1) A most suitable address to God. (2) Six petitions, the first three of which have an immediate reference to God, and the three last to ourselves. Or we may divide the six petitions into one petition for the chief end, to wit, the hallowing of the Father's name, and the five last petitions, as means for obtaining that chief end. Which means are either petitions for good things, to wit, spiritual in the second and third petition, and bodily in the fourth petition: or petitions for deprecating evil, both that which is past, in the fifth petition, and that which is to come in the sixth pe-

tition. (3) And we have then in this prayer of the Lord the conclusion, designed to ascribe suitable praise to the Lord, and to move him by his own glory and praise, and to strengthen and confirm the trust of the true petitioner. This pattern is wonderfully sententious and concise, manifesting the unsearchable wisdom of the greatest Advocate with the Father. We need not however seek in the six petitions, and in the conclusion following them certain prophecies of seven successive periods, and account for this by the wisdom of the Lord, as some do:* for we cannot produce either from this prayer, or from elsewhere any decisive proof of this, and therefore it doth not appear proper to denominate our own ungrounded inventions divine wisdom; and besides this, we may also see that those who judge thus are prejudiced in favour of those seven successive periods, for they do not consider the address to be prophetical, as they do the conclusion, because they should then have eight periods. If the prophetical sense of this prayer were wellgrounded, we should not then be able to use the several petitions at all times in their proper emphasis. If our method would permit, we should show that we could refer the conclusion of this prayer, as well, and with as much propriety, to the first period of the church, as the first petition is forced to that period, and we should find it thus with all the six petitions, which are applied to the other periods. For instance, when was it most proper to pray, Lead us not into temptation? was it not in the time of the heathen persecutions, and of the antichristian seductions? This they nevertheless refer, not to the sixth, but to the foregoing petitions. They think that the forgiveness of sins under the New Testament is expressed by the word *aphesis*; but we have that word in the sixth petition. Ought they not then, according to that supposition, to refer this petition to the time before the death of Christ, when believers prayed, as they pretend, for *aphesis*? Observe, in this manner do men intangle themselves, when in order to appear wise, they exceed their proper measure by farsought inventions.

III. That we may at length conclude our explanation of prayer, we will inquire in the first place, "why it is necessary for Christians to pray?" Every one will acknowledge that Christians are bound to

* By these our author understands the Cocceians, who expound many passages of scripture as prophecies, which are not considered as such by the generality of interpreters. They also divide the whole season of the New Testament church into seven periods, and endeavour in a very fanciful manner, to find them in many passages of scripture, in which there doth not appear to be the least probable hint of them.

pray, unless we will except the disciples of Van Hattem, who only give thanks, and do not pray, from their profane opinion concerning the Godhead, and the secret will of God, as the rule of our conduct. But those who understand the mystery suspect them with reason of denying the existence of a God, and of atheism, and consider them therefore as unfit and incapable of being instructed by natural and scriptural reasons. They who believe an infinite, simple, and supreme Spirit may be easily convinced, that prayer is necessary for Christians; for (a) "prayer is the chief part of thankfulness, which God requires of us." Christians are delivered by the Son of God with a great deliverance; it becomes them then to acknowledge it thankfully, which they do especially when they pray; for we thereby acknowledge our dependence on God, we contemplate and celebrate in a practical manner all his excellencies and perfections, and we engage that we will serve him, yea, prayer is a service, which we offer to God, in order to manifest our thankfulness; for the whole service of God is expressed by the phrase of "calling upon the name of the Lord," Gen. iv. 26. Joel ii. 32, Therefore "exalting the Lord as the God of his people, and worshipping before him, because he is holy," are joined together, Psalm xcix. 9. God also requires this of his delivered people, as the principal part of thankfulness, Psalm i. 14, 15, Philip. iv. 6 Rev. xv. 4. (b) "God will give his grace and his holy Spirit to those only, who with sincere desires ask them of him, and are thankful for them." The Lord knows the needs of his children, he hath purposed to supply them, and Christ hath purchased all things for them; but he hath appointed prayer to be a mean of obtaining our desires, and he will bestow nothing, except upon and through prayer. When God had promised great things to his people, and had assured them that he would do those things for them, he said that he would nevertheless "be inquired of that he might do those things." Ezek. xxxvi. 36, 37. See also how David and Daniel prayed to God for what he had already promised, that he would certainly do it, 2 Sam. vii. 27. Dan. ix. 2, 3.

APPLICATION.

Although the Pelagians will allow that Christians ought to pray, and although they also pray after their manner, nevertheless they

deny by their doctrine the necessity of prayer, when they assert that man can perform and merit all things by his freewill. For when a person hath an ability to effect and merit all virtuous good, what need hath he to pray to God for his grace, and his Spirit? Therefore when the Jesuits, Socinians and Remonstrants pray with a Pelagian spirit, they only flatter.

But what think ye, hearers, do ye also pray? Perhaps ye will wonder, and be displeased, if I tell you that the most of you do not yet pray, and have never yet prayed: it is nevertheless true, and it appears very evidently. For, (a) many know neither the Triune God, nor themselves, as desparately miserable, so as to be concerned, and they have not the least desire to God, nor to fellowship with him, nor to his blessed benefits. Is not this true? hath any active desire to enjoy the Lord ever possessed your minds? doth your misery affect you so, that it afflicts you, and causes you to cry to God? Hath it ever been your earnest endeavour to embrace the Son of God for grace and salvation, and thus to attain to a condition, that is acceptable to God, in order to have a right and an ability to pray to him? (b) It is true, ye pray also after your manner: but what and how do ye pray? ye say your ordinary forms and lessons, like a schoolboy to his master, ye have done this, and nought besides from your youth up hitherto. But I pray you, consider whether this be praying. Ye surely do not understand the things which ye express with those good and suitable words and forms: do ye not merely present God with a certain number of words without matter and without heart, as the Papists offer a certain number of mumbled prayers to God and the saints? Do not your souls remain far from the Lord, while ye pray thus? do ye express your desires to God, and entreat his favour by such praying? doth that ordinary prayer exhibit your particular need, desire and request? have ye always the same need and request, contrary to the temper and experience of sincere Christians? Friends, consider whether ye do by these ordinary lessons humble yourselves, acquire faith and boldness, draw near in the name of the Son of God, obtain a ground of confidence, that God will hear you, and whether ye be influenced to hearty thanksgivings, and to an intense earnestness? your prayers are certainly words only, without matter and without heart. And how detestably do many conduct, that they dare call upon God on their beds, although they are in health, like the careless Israelites, "who cried unto God, but not with their hearts, and howled upon their beds," Hosea vii. 14. (c) Perhaps some among us will detest such a conduct, and think that they quit themselves well, because they pray

from their heads, and either standing or kneeling. But is it only from your heads, and not from your hearts, how can such a fabricated speech be acceptable to God? for it is not then an address of your soul to God, it is not a making of your desire known to him, nor a request that he would fulfil it, but merely words concerning necessary and desirable things, and your souls do not draw near to God with ardent desires but remain cold and estranged from him. For thus ye draw near to him with your mouths and honour him with your lips, but remove your hearts far from him," Isaiah xxix. 13.

If this be your case, how wretched are ye! ye have never yet prayed: at least your praying hath not been in spirit and in truth. Ye cannot indeed pray, ye are not qualified for it: your prayer is sin, and abominable, it displeaseth the Lord; ye often lie in your praying, when ye thank him with your prayers, that he hath redeemed you by Jesus Christ, since by speaking only words, and always without heart in praying, ye yourselves show that ye neither know your misery, nor have ever earnestly desired, nor sought the Redeemer. He will also not hear you: for "he heareth not sinners," John ix 31. Doth he give you that which is good, it is not in his favour with and in Christ.

Say not, this is a hard saying, who can bear it? if this be so, why should we pray any longer? must we then forbear to pray? We speak thus only from love to you, that we may bring you to yourselves, and that ye may learn how to pray aright and acceptably to God. Ye cannot pray acceptably to God, and ye may nevertheless not forbear to pray: "God pours out his wrath upon them, who call not upon his name," Psalm lxxix. 10. Jer. x. 25. And therefore only know your wretched and miserable condition, that your danger may urge you to pray; it is our ordinary saying, that danger teaches a person to pray. When Paul was discouraged on account of his misery, he learned how to pray acceptably to God, so that the Lord testified of him, "Behold he prayeth," Acts. ix. 11. What think ye, if ye once saw your deplorable condition, that none of your sins were yet forgiven, that God did yet behold you in anger, that ye were unable to do what is necesary for you to do, in order to be saved, that ye had never yet prayed aright, that ye cannot pray so, and that therefore if ye die as ye are at present, ye must perish: would ye not be urged by your danger to retire, and enter into secret, to fall upon your knees, and cry to God for grace? doth not a stammering child, when he is hungry, and suffers pain, know how to complain of such matters to his parents, and to call upon them for help, and is not that stammering language of the child accepta-

ble to his parents? would not ye then, if ye were spiritually hungry, and had a painful sense of your misery, be able to complain, and to call upon God for his grace, and would not he be pleased with such addresses, though ye prayed ever so meanly and stammeringly? I believe he would. And therefore pause, and attend a while to your woful misery, contemplate it, and be concerned on account of it, that ye may with fervent prayers, "seek to God, and direct your speech unto him," as Eliphas adviseth, Job v. 8.

But, believers and redeemed ye who know how to pray through the Spirit of the Lord, let your souls engage often in hearty prayer. It is a difficult work, the flesh is unwilling to exercise itself in it. I consider it therefore proper to exhort you to attend to it with earnestness. For (a) your God, your Father, your Redeemer and Sanctifier hath enjoined it on you in his word, Psalm l. 15. Jer. xxxiii. 3. Matt. vii. 7. He often stirs your souls up to it. Your heart saith not less than David's in the Lord's stead, "Seek my face," Psalm xxvii. 8; will ye not then echo with him, "Thy face will I seek?" Dare ye be disobedient to that universal and great command? (b) It was foretold of you: the Lord foretold in ancient days concerning our times and people, that "all flesh should come and worship before him," Isaiah lxvi. 23. He saith, Zeph, iii. 9, 10, "Surely I will then turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering," Is it indeed your desire to defeat the prophecies, which have been formerly uttered concerning you, and not rather to confirm them by earnest and hearty prayers? it is your duty to fulfil these prophecies by your conduct. Hear what Paul saith to his "son Timothy," 1 Tim. i. 18, "This charge I commit unto thee, according to the prophecies, which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare." (c) Have not all the saints prayed frequently and fervently? Abel's sacrifice, with which God was well pleased, was not unaccompanied with prayer. Enoch walked with God by constant prayer: in what other manner did Abraham manifest that he was a friend of God? Isaac went into the field to pray:* Jacob arose in the night, and sent his household from him, over the brook, that he might wrestle alone with God. The time would fail me, if I should speak of Joshua, of Samuel, of Jabez, of all the holy prophets and apostles. Wherefore seeing we are compassed about

* This is agreeable to the Dutch translation.

with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also walk in the same way, and look especially to the chief Captain, and great leader of prayer Jesus, who, according to Luke xxi. 37, "was in the daytime teaching in the temple, and at night went out, and lodged in the mount," without doubt to pray See Mark i 25. (d) Ye have liberty, and that great privilege above others, that ye may come day by day to your Father, and speak familiarly to him. In ancient times the Jews only had liberty to call upon God, as near at hand, and other nations were, and remained strangers to the Lord, as Moses cries out with admiration of this. Deut. iv 7, "What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?" But believers of the Gentiles have now, as the Jews had then, "an access through Christ by one Spirit to the Father," Eph ii. 18. Formerly none but the Highpriest was permitted to appear solemnly once a year in the earthly holy of holies, before the face of the Lord, and the people of God through him; but, believers, ye have now all of you liberty, and indeed every day, yea, every hour, to go into a better holy place, through Jesus, the true Highpriest. Will ye not now make use of your liberty, and that great privilege? Hear what Paul saith, Heb. x. 19—22, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an Highpriest over the house of God: let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." (e) Ye, believers, and true Christians, even ye have an ability to pray. The sinner, who is in a state of nature, is bound hand and foot, through his ignorance and inability with respect to prayer: but the Lord, according to his promise, Zech. xii. 10, hath "poured out the Spirit of grace and of supplication upon you;" and according to Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 5, "he hath given you the Spirit of adoption, which crieth Abba Father: yea, which prayeth for and in you with groanings that cannot be uttered," Rom. viii. 26. Will ye then grieve and quench that Spirit of prayer by your sluggishness and listlessness? No, awake, and "stir up the gift of God, which is in you," as Paul admonisheth, 2 Tim. i. 6. (f) What a glorious, delightful and powerful work is prayer! the practice of it confers honour upon a person: "Jabez was more honourable than his brethren; for Jabez called upon the God of Israel," 1 Chron. iv. 9, 10. See this also of Samuel, Psalm, xcix. 6. Prayer is like Jacob's ladder, by which we climb up to heaven, and like the wings of an eagle, by which we mount up to heaven: by prayer we are with Paul caught up into the

paradise of God, the third heaven: we enter in through the inmost veil; we see him who is invisible; we speak to God as a man speaks to his friend, we walk with him, we cleave to him, and acquaint ourselves with him: by prayer we can shut and open heaven, with Elijah, overcome God, with Jacob, and with Moses, restrain his anger, so that he will not consume Israel. What think ye Christians, have ye not a desire to such a great work, and will ye not give yourselves wholly to it? (g) A Christian is in a good or evil state, according as he prays much or little, remissly or earnestly: his spiritual life must languish and decline when he is heartless in this duty; but when it is otherwise, he is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and grows like the calves of the stall. (h) Ye complain of corporal and spiritual afflictions; but whence do they proceed? do they not from your praying so seldom, and in such a heartless manner? the apostle James saith, "Ye have not, because ye ask not," James iv. 2. God suffers you, as it were, to dwell like the rebellious, in a dry land, that ye may pray earnestly to him: "I will go, and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early," saith God, Hosea v. 14. "He would bring a third part" of his people "into the fire:" but they should then also call upon his name," Zech. xiii. 9. What think ye, if ye exercised yourselves much in prayer, would ye not obtain more than ye do? "He gives liberally to him who prays, and upbraideth not," James i. 6. "He heareth prayer," and therefore "all flesh must come to him," Psalm lxv. 2. See Isaiah xxx. 18, 19. Jer. xxix. 11—14. The Lord doth still give you much, and ye are pleased with it, though ye pray little: but when he gives you that which is good upon your praying, it is then a double blessing, which causeth you to rejoice twice, once because he gives you that which is good, and once because he hears your prayer. Do ye see your duty and do ye delight in it, conduct yourselves then well in it; and particularly,

1. Beware that ye do not become slothful with respect to it. Praying is a difficult work, we must encourage ourselves, and exert all our strength for it, and must be intent upon it. It is therefore a hateful conduct, and hurtful to the soul, to study sometimes from mere sluggishness to defer prayer, until this or that opportunity, and to be inwardly wellpleased, when we are hindered by some accident, or can pray only in a cursory manner. Conscience saith, it is time for you to seek the Lord, but your listlessness hinders you from setting about it, except in a slothful manner, and ye depart thus further and further from the Lord, who hides his face from the

soul. The spouse slept, while her heart was awake: when her bridegroom knocked, she was so overcome with spiritual drowsiness, that she suffered him to stand at the door; but he went his way, and what distress did she experience, and what pains was she obliged to take, before he would suffer himself to be entreated by her, Song v. 2—8.

2. Take heed that an unbelieving fear do not beset you, at least, that it do not hinder you from praying. The corruption of your heart, your ill behaviour, your falling repeatedly into sin ought indeed to render you humble, and induce you to stand afar off, like the publican, and cry only for grace; but these things ought not to drive you from the Lord, nor cause you to despair, as though there were no grace, nor mercy with the Lord for you; for by acting thus ye dishonour God, as if his grace and mercy could not overmatch your sins, and could not swallow your sin up. The soul saith sometimes indeed with the people of God, "If my transgressions and my sins be upon me, and I pine away in them, how should I then live? but the Lord saith, As I live I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked," Ezek. xxxiii. 10, 11. Are ye not grieved for your sins, will ye hold them fast; remain then aloof, and flee from the Lord, like Cain and Judas; but do ye seek to be delivered from your sins and sinfulness, "cast not then away your confidence, which hath a great recompence of reward," Heb. x. 35.

3. Watch against wandering thoughts; for these remove the heart far from the Lord, even when we draw near to him with our mouths. Do they beset you, endeavour to banish them from you; disengage your minds from them. Are ye not able, propose your requests then, not with many, but with few words, and do not make "use of vain repetitions," contrary to the advice of the Saviour, Mat. vi. 7. We must therefore take good heed that we do not hurry too much, in order to finish our prayer, and utter only many words in haste, and also that we do not limit ourselves to a certain time, praying just so long, and no longer: "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few," Eccl. v. 2.

4. None of us may think that he may abstain from praying, when he is not influenced in just such or such a particular manner by the Spirit of prayer. It is true, we cannot pray aright without his preventing influence; yet we may not forbear to pray, when we do not enjoy that influence, but the experience of our inability, which the Holy Ghost also worketh in us, should urge and induce us to pray

vehemently, and we shall experience that the Lord will recompence our zeal, and that he will, as he hath promised, Isaiah lxiv. 5, "meet those who remember him in his ways." Therefore the soul ought also to look up to the Lord, and to depend upon him for the promised "Spirit of grace and of supplications," Zech. xii. 10.

5. Pray for yourselves, but also for the community. It behooves you to mention the land and the place of your habitation to the Lord. God required that they who were carried away captive should pray for Babylon, Jer. xxix. 7. How much more then ought we to remember in our prayers this good land, in which we enjoy liberty and happiness! And since the prosperity of the land depends greatly upon the magistrates, we ought also to "pray for kings, and all that are in authority; that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty," as Paul admonisheth, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 23. Forget not your family and children: Isaac prayed for his wife, Gen. xxv. 21. Abraham for Ishmael, Gen. xvii. 18, and David for his child, when it was sick, 2 Sam. xii. 15, 16. But the church of the Lord, "Jerusalem," ought more especially to "come into your mind." Jer. li. 50. "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem," said David to the Lord, although he was sufficiently burthened with his own affliction, Psalm li. 18.

6. Unite with, and forsake not the ordinary prayers of the church; for the Lord manifests himself present with his church, and he hears those prayers: "when only two agree touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father," saith Jesus, Mat. xviii. 19. Masters and mistresses of families ought also to pray for, and with their whole family: "Isaac prayed for, and in the presence of his wife," Gen. xxv. 21. How can families, in which family prayers are neglected, be considered as godly? they cannot certainly expect a blessing. Neither ought private and solitary prayers to be neglected: for we have surely something of a particular nature to lay before the Lord, which we do not desire others to know. We exercise fellowship with God chiefly in such a retired solitude. See what Solomon and the Lord Jesus say, Prov. xviii. 1. Mat. vi. 6.

7. "Pray without ceasing," saith the apostle, 1 Thess. v. 17. How can or may this be done? our spirit, as long as it is in this mortal body, cannot endure to be always intent upon any subject: God hath also enjoined it upon man to exercise himself in many other employments. But the phrase, "without ceasing" denotes either that we should persevere in prayer, and, as it were, weary the

Lord with our praying, until he show us favour: "for this end Jesus spake the parable of the widow, who wearied, as it were, the ungodly judge, in order to show that men ought always to pray, and not to faint," Luke xviii 1—7. We ought thus to "continue instant in prayer, and to watch in the same with thanksgiving," Col. iv. 2. Or "to pray without ceasing" denotes being continually in a supplicating posture of mind toward the Lord, even while we are engaged in our daily callings, like Nehemiah," who prayed to the God of heaven, even when the king spake to him," Neh. ii. 4. Or it intimates observing our stated seasons of prayer. David and Daniel "prayed in the morning, at noon and night," Psalm lv. 17. Dan. vi. 11. This is praying without ceasing, as the morning and evening sacrifice is called "the continual sacrifice," Exod. xxix. 38, 39 Dan. viii. 11.

8. As we ought to demean ourselves well, while we pray, praying with humility, with boldness, in the name of Christ, with confidence, with thanksgiving, with intense earnestness in spirit and in truth, and with becoming gestures of the body, so we ought also to endeavour to be well disposed before and after prayer. Before prayer we ought to prepare ourselves for it in a suitable manner, "to order ourselves and keep watch," with David, Psalm v. 3. We ought to dismiss all our worldly thoughts, to inquire what we need, and endeavour to have a suitable sense of God, to whom we are about to draw near: but we ought in a more particular manner actually to repent of and forsake our sins, and to entertain a steadfast resolution to resist them in future. Zophar, the friend of Job, said to him, "If thou prepare thy heart, and stretch out thy hand toward him: if iniquity be in thy hand, put it far from thee, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tents," Job xi. 13, 14 After prayer, inquire for what and how ye have prayed, and whether ye be the better for it. Let your hearts continue turned to the Lord, and, as it were, employed in repeating your prayer, and look out for an answer, in order to hear what God the Lord will speak, trusting that "he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but turn not again unto folly," Psalm lxxxv. 8. Doth the Lord hear you, rejoice, and praise him. David was so well pleased with God's hearing of him, that he would not only praise the Lord himself, Psalm cxviii. 21, but would also inform others, who feared God, of God's kindness in this respect, that they likewise might praise the Lord, Psalm lxvi. 16 – 20. Yea, he found that he was unable to do this alone in proportion to the value of the benefit, and therefore he called upon others to help him: "O magnify the Lord with me,

and let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears," saith he to the people of God, Psalm xxxiv. 3, 4. To conclude, I will finish this discourse with the request of the church, Psalm xx. 1—4. "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble: the name of the God of Jacob defend thee: send thee help from the sanctuary; and strengthen thee out of Zion: remember all thine offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice; Selah. Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel," Amen.

THE ADDRESS

OF

PRAYER.

XLVI. LORD'S DAY.

Mat. vi. 6. Our Father which art in heaven.

Q. 120. *Why hath Christ commanded us to address God thus, Our Father?*

A. That immediately in the very beginning of our prayer he might excite in us a childlike reverence for, and confidence in God, which are the foundation of our prayer; namely, that God is become our Father in Christ, and will much less deny us what we ask of him in true faith, than our parents will refuse us earthly things.

Q. 121. *Why is it here added, "Which art in heaven?"*

A. Lest we should form any earthly conceptions of God's heavenly majesty, and that we may expect from his almighty power all things necessary for soul and body.

"DANGER will cause a person to pray:" this is a common proverb with us. It is also true: for when a man is in danger, he is constrained to call for help. Seafaring men, though ever so care-

less and dissolute, when they are in danger, and cannot deliver themselves, will stretch out their hands toward heaven, and call upon God for relief. If a man will learn to pray, saith another proverb, let him go to sea. But how true soever it be, that danger will cause us to pray, it doth not however teach us the right nature of prayer; the mind is too much agitated and disturbed by danger, to draw near to the true God with deliberation and faith. Danger doth not teach the afflicted person for what things he ought to pray, in what method, and with what motives he ought to propose his requests: "We know not what we should pray for as we ought," saith the apostle, Rom. viii. 26. Danger causeth him to cry at random to an unknown God: but who the true and adorable God is, and in what manner he ought to address him, this danger will not discover to him. When "the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken, and the mariners were afraid; then they cried every man to his god," and therefore to his idol, Jonah i. 4, 5. If a man shall learn to pray aright, and in a manner that is acceptable to God, he must have an expert teacher. When a person will apply to his prince for relief in a civil danger and distress, he finds himself fearful, and abashed, because he knows not with what titles he ought to address his prince, or how, and in what manner he ought to propose his request to him: he will therefore betake himself to some person, who is more skilful than himself, and obtain a petition of him, that he may present it to his prince. Thus believers also have their teacher, who teaches them to pray, and composes a petition for them, that they may present it with their requests to the God of heaven. "The Spirit," saith Paul, "helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered," Rom. viii. 26. The disciples of John the baptist were fain to learn of their master how to pray: and the disciples of Jesus, knowing their needs, and the necessity of prayer, but not the right method of praying in a manner which is acceptable to God, desire also of their Lord, "that he would teach them to pray, as John taught his disciples." Jesus was too good to deny their request, and he therefore composes a most perfect prayer for them, and "saith to them, when ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name," &c Luke xi. 1—4. In this prayer he teaches them with what confidence and reverence they ought to address God, what matters they ought to ask of him, in what method they

ought to propose them, and with what motives they ought to enforce their requests.

We must speak at present only of the address of prayer; and inquire with the instructor concerning this,

I. Why believers, when they pray, must address God as "their Father," and then,

II. Why they must consider him, in their approaches to him, as "in heaven."

1. The Lord doth not send the children of God to the saints, but directly to their Father. The people of God were also to turn from the saints to the Lord, as their Father: "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our Father," thus they spake, Isaiah lxiii. 16.

Although the essence of God, and also the Son and the Holy Ghost may be called Father, and ought to be worshipped, nevertheless we must understand here, with the instructor, by the Father the first Person; for he saith, in order to explain this, that God is become our Father through Christ." This is also according to the word of God, which teacheth us that in the œconomy of grace the first Person hath undertaken to exhibit the majesty of the Godhead of the whole Trinity in his Person, as the Son should accomplish the work of redemption, as Mediator, and thus as the Father's servant, and the Holy Spirit should render the elect partakers of the redemption. Therefore the first Person must be considered as the fountain of all grace, from whom we derive all things through the Son and the Holy Ghost: "We have one God, even the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him: and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things," saith the apostle, 1 Cor. viii. 6. Although we ought to worship the Son and the Holy Ghost, as well as the Father, we may nevertheless not end in the Son, or in the Holy Ghost: but we must proceed through the Holy Ghost and the Son to the Father, and end in him: "For through Christ we have an access by the Spirit unto the Father," according to Eph. ii. 18. Even the Son and the Holy Ghost pray to the Father for and in believers, as Christ and his servant Paul teach us, John xiv. 16. Rom. viii. 26, as the Son and the Holy Ghost do also receive all things of the Father for believers. Therefore Jesus saith, John xvi. 13—15. "The Spirit of truth shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come: he will glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." The apostles therefore called upon the first

Person under the name of Father, Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 3. 2 Cor. i. 2. Gal. i. 3. Eph. i. 2. iii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 3. 2 John vrs. 3. It is true, the Son and the Holy Spirit are in heaven, as well as the Father. Yet the Son was sent as Mediator by the Father out of heaven upon earth, and was "exalted again by the right hand of the Father, as his Vicegerent, to his throne, that he might be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins," Rev. iii. 21. Acts v. 31. Thus also "the Holy Spirit is sent forth" by the Father through the Son "into the hearts" of believers, and "cries" in them, "Abba, Father," Gal. iv. 6. But the Father is, and abides in heaven, upon his throne, and the Son and the Holy Ghost receive all things from him, and therefore the first Person is called heavenly Father, Matt. vi. 14. xviii. 10, 14, 19. On this account the words of James must also be understood of the first Person: "Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights," James i. 17.

That God is the Father of Christ by an eternal and inconceivable generation, this we have shown in our explanation of the thirteenth Lord's day. But here believers call him their Father, not so much on account of creation and preservation, for in this respect he is the Father of the ungodly also; but he is the Father of believers by grace through Christ, in and through whom they may draw near with their prayers to God, who is their Father by regeneration, by a spiritual marriage with the Son of God, and by adoption, as we have shown upon the ninth Lord's day.

Behold, O believers, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon you, that ye should be called the children of God. Ye, and no others, have a right to address him, as your Father, and to expect all good things of him. God is indeed the Father of the sinner, who is still in a state of nature, by creation, and he bestows therefore many good things on him; for "God is good to all, and his mercies are over all his works:" but the unconverted sinner, having forfeited all things, and being "without Christ, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world," as the apostle speaks, Eph. ii. 12, hath no right at all to address God with confidence as his Father in Christ. When he doth it, he lies, and his confidence is vain. If he will call upon God as his Father, he must earnestly seek to be regenerated, and to obtain his Maker for his husband, that he may be able, and may have a right to cry Abba, Father. That Spirit is indeed the Spirit of faith, which appropriates and owns God as a Father, and causeth us to address him as

such; either by a direct act of faith, by which a person receives the Son, and thus also the Father in him, and draws near to him with confidence upon his invitation; or by a reflex act of faith, by which the soul, observing her believing outgoings toward God, perceives that God is her Father, and "goes thus with boldness and with confidence to him through faith in Christ," as Paul speaks, Eph. iii. 12. Heb. iv. 16. x. 18—22.

Every believer hath liberty, with Elihu, and with the church, to address God as his Father, Job xxxiv. 36. Jer. iii. 4, 19. But Jesus requires that believers in general, gathered from among Jews and Gentiles, should with one heart and with one mouth call God their Father. They are indeed all children of God in Christ Jesus, and have all an equal right to the Lord: the minds of all tend with their desires to one Father, the same wants and desires urge them all to their Father's throne, and their souls are knit to each other in love, as brethren, so that they cry jointly to him, as children of one Father. Therefore when the believer is about to pray, he must from his heart forgive every injury that hath been done to him by his brother, and banish his displeasure out of his heart, that he may unite himself to him in love, and appear thus with him before the throne, especially, when "he agrees with his brother touching any thing that they shall ask." Such an agreement of two persons is indeed effectual: "that thing," saith the Saviour, Matt xviii. 19, "shall be done for them by my Father which is in heaven." There is no reason to doubt but that God the Lord was the Father of the believers under the Old Testament in the Messiah, who was to come. For they had "the adoption," Rom. ix. 4. They were also called the children of God, Exod. iv. 22. Deut. xiv. 1. God called himself "their Father," Deut. xxxii. 36. Isaiah lxiii. 16. lxiv. 8. But although they were in a much happier condition than the heathens, yea, than all the outward professors among the Israelites, they were nevertheless, like minor "children, under tutors and governours," of the law of ceremonies, "the rudiments of the world, and they differed in nothing from servants, though they were lords of all." But believers of the New Testament, being delivered by the coming of Christ from the law, have like those who are of full age, outgrown those tutors and governours, and have a greater boldness, and a more abundant measure of the spirit of adoption, by which they can "cry, Abba, Father," as Paul teacheth, Gal. iv. 1—6. And even now yet the sonship of believers is not perfect, since they have not yet the full possession of all their inheritance, but will obtain it first in the blessed resurrection; for "they wait yet for the adoption of children, even the redemption of their bodies," as we read, Rom.

viii. 23. But Jesus chooses that they should cry unto God as their Father, in order that they may obtain their inheritance gradually.

Believers are then exhorted to address God, as their Father, not because he is willing to become their Father, and to show them all fatherly kindness, if they will perform their duty aright, as the Pelagians speak; but they must address him thus, because he is already become their Father through Christ, for he is their Father by regeneration, by a spiritual marriage with Christ, and by adoption, before they perform their duty aright. The Lord God "predestinated them to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ from eternity, according to the good pleasure of his will," without any respect to their duty, and from his own free choice, according to Eph. i 5. Surely, no sinner can, nor may address God with boldness, as long as the Lord is not his Father A believer, who is yet unexperienced, and is not sufficiently assured that he is in a state of grace, will indeed entreat God to become his Father, but this proceeds from the weakness of his faith, and he will not see, nor attend to his right exercises, while he is praying; for he views himself as too deficient and sinful, and he will cry therefore with the publican only for grace, Luke xviii. 13.

But why doth the Lord Jesus require that we should address God particularly as our Father? It would surely be right to call him Lord, God, Almighty, Wise and Good: for believers both of the Old and New Testament have addressed him thus. It is true; but when our Saviour teacheth us to worship God as Father, he doth not thereby condemn every other mode of address; but he chooses that we should address God as Father particularly in this short pattern of prayer not only because all other titles of honour, that can excite confidence and reverence, are comprehended in the words, 'Our Father which art in heaven;" and because in whatsoever manner we address God, we must possess a childlike disposition toward him, and consider him as a Father: but particularly because when we call God our Father, we express the nearest and dearest relation, that subsists between God and believers, and this enables them to pray to him with suitable dispositions. For,

1. Thus they become bold, and consequently able to draw near to him in a familiar manner, and to exercise a sweet fellowship with him by prayer We can indeed have a greater boldness toward our father, than toward our lord and judge. In order that he might induce the Israelites to call on him freely, after they had provoked him greatly, he saith, Jer. iii. 4, "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?"

2. This furnishes them with an argument, wit' which they urge and move him vehemently to grant their requests. The church praying under grievous distress in a plaintive manner, urgeth her petition thus, Isaiah lxiii. 16, "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer is thy name from everlasting." The Lord is so well pleased with their calling him their Father when they cry to him, that he suffers Himself to be overcome by it, so that he is induced to shew kindness to his people, which he can otherwise scarcely do, on account of their sins. Hear what the Lord himself saith of it, Jer. iii. 19, "I said how long shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the host of nations? and I said, thou shalt call me my Father, and shalt not turn away from me."

3. When believers address God, as their Father, it excites a childlike trust and confidence in them toward God, that their prayer is acceptable to him, and that he will grant their petition. Is he become their Father in Christ, and will he then refuse them that which is less? "He who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" saith Paul, Rom. viii. 32. When a man hears his child cry to him in distress, my father, help me, will not his bowels yearn over him, and will he not give his child what he desires? May and ought not then the consideration that God is a Father, and that he will be addressed as such, induce believers to "confide in the very beginning of their prayers, that God will grant them their petition?" The Saviour teacheth this, Matt. vii. 9—11. "What man is there of you, whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

4. It will tend no less to excite also a childlike fear and reverence in believers, that they contemplate and address him as their Father. We must "fear our father and mother," according to the law; Lev. xix. 3. Much more then God the Father, who is higher than the highest. "A son," saith the Lord, Mal. i. 6, "honoureth his father, and a servant his master; if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?" To contemplate God as a Lord and Judge may affect a person with a slavish fear, which will drive him from the Lord: but to address him as a Father, will excite indeed a dread for God in the believer, but it will be attended with a childlike affection, that will lead him to

the Lord. Therefore Peter saith, "If ye call on him as a Father,* who without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear," 1 Pet. i. 17.

II. How often doth familiarity beget contempt! As children converse most familiarly with their parents, they are not always impressed with a suitable reverence for them. The Lord Jesus, desiring to excite a becoming awe for the Father in his disciples, teacheth them to pray, Our Father, "which art in heaven." In the third petition only one heaven is mentioned, but here more than one.† The air is the first heaven, in which the birds fly, which are therefore called "the fowls of heaven," Matt. vi. 26. xiii. 20. The firmament, in which the sun, moon and stars shine, is also called heaven. David "considered the heaven, the work of God's fingers, the moon and the stars," Psalm viii. 3. We read finally of the Paradise of God, which is called "the third heaven, and the heaven of heavens," 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4. 1 Kings viii. 27.

Whoever will address God must consider him as in heaven: he is therefore often called the heavenly Father. We explain and prove upon other occasions, that the Lord God is omnipresent, neither included nor excluded any where; and it is therefore also certain, that God is not shut up in the heavens, nor confined to them: "Behold the heavens, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee," saith Solomon, 1 Kings viii. 27. But he is said to be in the heavens, (1) Because he manifests his glory and majesty in the heavens, more than elsewhere; for he is there, as in his palace, and upon his throne: "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all," saith David, Psalm ciii. 10. Who can behold the visible heavens, the first and the second heaven, with all that appears in them, without being ravished at the sight, and crying out with David, Psalm civ. 1—3, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: O Lord my God, thou art very great, thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light, as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters, who maketh the clouds his chariot, who walketh upon the wings of the wind." And he manifests his glory still more in the third heaven, where he is encircled, attended upon and glorified by his courtiers, even all the blessed, and especially his angels, as Micaiah and Isaiah saw him thus in a vision, "sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him, on his right hand and on his left, ready to serve

* This is agreeable to the Dutch translation.

† According to the Dutch translation.

him, and proclaiming his glory with a loud voice," 1 Kings xxii. 19. Isaiah vi. 1—3. For "the Lord is there in his holy palace, and his throne is in heaven," as David speaks, Psalm xi. 4. And therefore God hath "a heavenly majesty," as the instructor speaks. (2) God is also in the heavens, as in his treasury, from which he sends down to his children whatsoever they need for soul and body. He sends them from heaven light, heat, rain and drought, and renders the earth habitable and fruitful. "The Lord," saith Moses, Deut. xxviii. 12, "shall open to thee his good treasure, to give the rain to thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thy hand." See also Acts xix. 17. Yea, from the highest heaven he sends his Spirit, and all heavenly grace down; for "every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights," James i. 17. Because the Father will communicate all his saving grace only through his Son, therefore he took him up to himself into heaven, and "exalted him by his right hand, that he might receive of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, and shed him forth," Acts ii. 33. The Saviour hath manifested his wisdom by directing us to address our Father, as he "who is in heaven;" for he teacheth us thus,

1. To call upon the only, true and high God, and that we ought not to turn to the idols; for that he is in heaven distinguishes him, as the true God, from the idols: "Our God is in the heavens, he hath done whatsoever he pleased. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands:" thus the people of God speak, Psalm cxv. 3, 4, The forefathers of Israel, "Abraham and Israel," were indeed in heaven, but not like the Lord, who "alone was their Father," in heaven, and therefore they betook themselves to him, and prayed that "he would look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of his holiness and of his glory," Isaiah lxiii. 15. 16. Therefore the Saviour requires that we should "call no man on earth our father," so as wholly to submit to him and trust in him, because God alone, "who is in heaven, is our Father," Matt. xxiii. 9.

2. The Saviour admonisheth us by this addition, "which art in heaven," that we should not form any earthly conceptions of the heavenly majesty of God. It is altogether unsuitable to entertain degrading ideas of him, "who sitteth above the circle of the earth, the inhabitants whereof are as grasshoppers before him; who stretcheth out the heavens, as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in," Isaiah xl. 18, 22. Therefore when we address the heavenly Father, we must by all means do it with exalted conceptions of him, and must thereby dispose ourselves to humility and

reverence: "Be not rash with thy mouth," saith the preacher, "and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few," Eccl. v. 2

3. Is the Father, upon whom we call, in heaven, we must then "expect from his almighty power all things necessary for soul and body:" for "is he in heaven," he is then almighty, and "doth whatsoever he pleaseth," Psalm cxv. 3. In heaven he is in his full storehouse, and therefore allsufficient, and so "able to make all grace abound toward us; that we always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work," 2 Cor ix. 8. Since now this heavenly, and therefore almighty God is the Father of believers, therefore they can and may look for that which is good from him only.

4. We must then also seek heavenly more than earthly things; for God the Father, who is the principal portion of his children, is heavenly, every blessing cometh down from heaven, and in proportion as heavenly are higher and worthier than earthly things, we ought to pursue heavenly more than earthly things. Hath the child of God a right to seek also earthly things, he may not desire them as the principal things, but only as appendages, that he may by them be led up to heavenly things. Therefore the Lord Jesus saith, Mat. vi. 33. "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you"

5. Once more; the Saviour chooseth that we should address the Father, as he "who is in heaven," that we may call on him with a heavenly heart, which lifts itself up to heaven, and places itself before his throne, and speaks to him there. Believers have for this end "lifted up their eyes, hands and hearts toward heaven," as we see, Psalm cxxiii. 1, Lam iii 41 Believers under the Old Testament turned themselves toward Jerusalem, the temple and the ark, as Solomon, 1 Kings viii. 44. David and Daniel, Psalm v. 7. Dan. vi. 11, because there the Lord exhibited a special token of his presence, and "sat, and dwelled there between the cherubims," Psalm lxxx. 1. Isaiah xxxvii. 16, as a type, that "all the fulness of the Godhead should dwell in the human nature of the Messiah, who was to come, and that "the Word should become flesh, and dwell among us, that we might behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," Col. ii. 9. John i. 14. Believers of that time did not however neglect to turn themselves toward heaven, and address God as in heaven. They directed their eyes and hands with their hearts toward heaven, as we have just now shown, and Solomon prayed "that God would hear in

heaven his dwellingplace," 1 Kings viii. 39. But when they turned themselves toward Jerusalem the temple and ark they showed then that they looked to the Surety, and worshipped in his name the Father, who was in heaven.

APPLICATION.

See, hearers, what a great and glorious privilege true believers obtain of the Lord, that he, who is the God of heaven, and who is exalted above all, is the Father of them, who are by nature "of their father the devil," John viii 44, "children of wrath," Eph. ii. 3, "and of the curse," 2 Peter ii. 14. If they were children of a great king, it would be a great matter. "When David was solicited to become the son-in-law of Saul, he said to the messengers of the king, Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?" 1 Sam xviii. 22, 23. But that such arrant wretches should become the sons and daughters of the Almighty and Most High is surely inconceivable; "Behold," saith the beloved disciple of Jesus, "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God," 1 John iii. 1. Who can conceive or express the greatness of this love? for they are "the offspring of God, born of God," John i. 13. The Son of God, O wonderful! is "their Maker and their Husband," Isaiah liv. 5. They have one God and Father with him, John xx. 17, and they have been translated into the family of God, that they may enjoy all the true and exalted privileges of children, to wit, that "they may have an access" with confidence "through the Son and the Holy Ghost, being no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints and of the household of God," Eph. ii. 18, 19. Yea, they have even liberty through him to converse familiarly in his palace, even heaven, "to have their conversation in heaven," Philip. iii. 20, and to "enter into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus," Heb. vi. 19, 20. Behold, thus hath the Lord exalted the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints, even of the children of Israel, a people nigh unto him," Psalm cxlviii. 14.

Although every one calls God in this common prayer his Father, it is nevertheless certain that God is not the Father of all men, Moses saith of Israel after the flesh, Deut. xxxii. 5. "They are not

his children, a blot cleaveth to them, they are a crooked and perverse generation*." The Jews, who were not made free by the Son, although they were in other respects the people of God, are said "to be of their father the devil," John viii. 44. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel; neither because they are of the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called, that is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed," saith Paul, Rom. ix. 6—8.

Is this so, let every one then see and inquire whether he be also a child. Let none think, that this is such a secret matter, that we cannot learn how it is with us in this respect. The reformed church hath long since expelled by the word of God this popish unbelief. Do not these saints and these excellent ones in the earth outshine the children of hell in one particular, or another whereby they may be known? Verily God hath set a mark in their hearts and in their foreheads by his Spirit. These marks are exhibited in the word of God: see only, Rom. viii. and the epistles of John. Attend to these, which are the principal evidences:

1. Those, who, as true children, address God as their Father, do it upon the ground of faith, either by a direct act of faith, whereby they accept of the Son, and the Father in the Son by an active direct motion of the soul: for "as many as have received the Son, to them hath he given power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name," John i. 12, or by a reflex act of faith, by which, attending carefully to themselves, they see and know with Paul, "in whom they have believed," 2 Tim. i. 12. "The Spirit causeth them to know the things which are freely given them of God," according to 1 Cor. ii. 12, and thus "the Spirit of God beareth witness with their spirits, that they are the children of God," as the same apostle teacheth, Rom. viii. 16. Before they have this witness, they dare not call God with any confidence their Father. It is true, they have not always such an assurance; and therefore they are not always so confident; but as they cannot remain absent from the Lord, they will call on him time after time, that he would be pleased to become their Father, and they will for this end continually lay hold on the Son, they will lift themselves up in faith, and will give themselves no rest, until God saith unto them, "I am thy salvation," Psalm xxxv. 3. Others inquire not so much concerning this, and are not so scrupulous whether they may address God as

* We have rendered this passage according to the Dutch translation.

their Father, and they call him so inconsiderately, and from custom.

2. The children of God will love their fellowchildren, their brethren and sisters heartily, because God loves them, and they love God; and the more this love of God, and to him shines forth in them, the more they love them, even when they rebuke and reprove them: "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness," &c. saith David, Psalm cxli. 5. This mutual love is a certain evidence, that a person is a child of God: "We know," saith the apostle John, "that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren," 1 John iii. 14. The children of God certainly love God, as their Father, and therefore they love his children also. Hear what the same apostle saith, 1 John v. 1. "Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him." Others, who are not children of God, will either make no difference between persons, or will even hate, at least in their hearts, the children of God, on account of their godliness; or, if they love them, it is for the sake of lucre, or on account of their agreeable manners, or because it is an honour to join themselves to that people.

3. They who address God in Spirit and in truth as their Father, endeavour to penetrate into heaven, even unto the throne of God, that they may speak with and to God himself. Others are satisfied with mumbling a few words, and merely uttering them: "they draw near to him with their mouths, and honour him with their lips, but remove their hearts far from him," Isaiah xxix. 13. But the children of God desire to be near him, and to speak to him; if they cannot, it grieves them, they wrestle and weary themselves, until he opens an access for them, places them near him, and saith, Behold, here am I. Hear how Job sighs, "O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him," Job xxiii. 3, 4.

Apply these things now to yourselves, and see whether they be in you. Do ye know nothing of them, are ye unacquainted with this work of the heart with and toward the Father; judge then for yourselves whether it be lawful for you to look upon him, and address him as your Father. If ye do this notwithstanding, ye only "flatter him with your mouths, and lie unto him with your tongues," Psalm lxxviii. 36. Expect not that he will send blessings down for you from his storehouse of heaven, but curses: "Upon the wicked he will rain snares: fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest shall be the portion of their cup," saith David, Psalm xi. 6. Where will your souls abide, when they depart hence? and where your bodies, united to your souls, when that great and notable day of the

Lord shall come? in heaven? no, for your father is not there, but "in everlasting fire." in order to receive there "the inheritance of your father the devil, and of his angels for ever," according to the sentence of the great Judge, Matt. xxv. 41.

Therefore "recover out of the snare of the devil, in which ye are taken captive at his will," 2 Tim. ii. 26. Rest not, until God is become your Father. Let it not suffice you, that he is your Father as Creator; for since ye have apostatized from him, and have violated his image, his most goodly work, ye may not address him with confidence as your Father by creation; he is become, on account of your transgressions, "a devouring fire and everlasting burnings" to you, and therefore ye "cannot dwell" with him, nor draw near to him, Isaiah xxxiii. 14. But do this, "lay hold on" his Son, "his strength, and make your peace with him, that he may not attack you as thorns and thistles, and burn you together," Isaiah xxvii. 4, 5.

But, believers, children of the Most High, why do ye indulge so many hard thoughts of your heavenly Father, as if he were a rigorous master, and embrace thus without reason your own sorrow? is it not true? for (a) ye often suspect your childship, and draw near in your prayers with so much slavish fear, as if that were most safe for you; yea, ye dare not often address him as your Father, as if he would take it ill, when he nevertheless desires to hear those words, "My Father," out of your mouths: Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth," Jer. iii. 4. (b) Sometimes ye venture to draw near to the Son more than to the Father, imagining that the Father is a rigorous Judge, who demands satisfaction for your sins, but that the Son hath a goodwill to poor sinners: just as if the Son could have a goodwill to sinners, and the Father at the same time not love them, when the Father sent his Son from his love. Hear what the Lord Jesus saith, John xvi. 26, 27. "I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the "Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me." (c) The smallest sin discourageth you, and renders you fearful of coming to the throne of the Father; yea, ye will, on account of your backslidings, omit even your stated and ordinary prayers. It is childlike to humble ourselves on account of sin; but it is slavish to remain absent and to run from our Father. How! did the Lord adopt you for his children, when all your sins lay upon you, and shall the least sin extinguish all his fatherly affection for you, now ye are his children? When the prodigal son came to his father, and confessed his sins, he was not rejected by him: but "his father seeing him afar off, had compassion on him, and ran, and fell on

his neck, and kissed him," Luke xv. 18—20. (d) Are ye under any heavy cross, ye forthwith suspect him of rigour, become fretful and uneasy and complain, "The Lord hath forsaken me; and my Lord hath forgotten me." But what saith the answer of God? "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee," Isaiah xlix. 14—16. (e) How seldom do ye commend your wants to the care of your Father! Ye keep them often to yourselves, become dejected, and endeavour to relieve yourselves by various strange methods, as if the Lord did not regard your affairs: "My way," saith the soul, "is hidden from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God," Isaiah xl. 27. As if the Lord were so unmerciful, that he would harden his heart against the mournful complaints of those whom he loved. And so men dishonour and reproach their Father, who requires that they should think well of him, and trust in him. Therefore

1. Endeavour to obtain an assurance, that ye are his children, and that he is truly become your Father through Christ. Ye have certainly the evidences; for ye cannot deny that ye exercise faith toward God in Christ, nor that ye love the children of God, nor that ye lift up your souls to God in the heaven. Hath it not also been clearly discovered to you by the witnessing of God's Spirit with your spirits in the light of the Lord, and by the embraces of his love, so that ye could not any longer deny that ye were the children of God? Will ye reject again and again such clear and palpable evidences, embrace your distress, and consider the work of God as deceit? No, no. Rather lift up your souls in faith, and acknowledge him even in darkness to be your Father, like the church, Isaiah lxiii. 16. "Doubtless, thou art our Father," and again, "Thou, O Lord, art our Father."

2. Thank him for the happy privilege, that he is your Father, and that ye have liberty to speak to him, as your Father who is in heaven, so that ye may desire all things of him with boldness and confidence. It is a great matter, ye have it not of yourselves, but of him; and not on account of your worthiness, or because ye have moved him by your good works. It is only through his Son, and from his free and everlasting love and grace, that it may be to his praise: "Having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved," saith the apostle, Eph i. 5, 6.

3. Make use now of your liberty, and indeed familiarly. For is

he your Father, who is in heaven, "cast not then away your confidence, which hath a great recompence of reward," Heb. x. 35, but go frequently with boldness to the throne, send up thither all your groanings, complaints, desires and requests. He is indeed your Father, he encourageth you, and ye will please him, if ye pour out your complaints often into his bosom, like children: "Let us therefore go boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," Heb. iv. 16.

4. Commit your concerns to him, when ye pray, trusting that he will accept your petitions, and answer them in his own time, and in his own way, and grant you your requests. For he is your Father, who bears a kind and fatherly heart toward you, and loves you more than any earthly father, and too much to refuse you your reasonable petitions. Therefore "commit your way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass," Psalm xxxvii. 5.

5. Be always impressed with a holy reverence for him, as well in drawing near to the Father, "worshipping in his fear toward his holy temple," with David, Psalm v. 7, as in waiting for an answer to your prayers, leaving the time, the manner and measure thereof to him, like the Lord Jesus, who, when he prayed in his great agony to his Father, that the cup might pass from him, said, "yet not my will but thy will be done," Mat. xxvi. 39. Thus also the children of God ought to conduct toward him with a holy awe in all their conversation. Peter teacheth us this, 1 Peter i. 17. "If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." For he is your Father in heaven.

6. When ye call on your Father, think then also of your brethren and sisters, who perhaps have need of more than ye, and cannot call on him, as well as ye can. Therefore the Saviour teacheth you to say, not "my," but "our" Father. This is often enjoined: see Psalm cxxii. 6. Jer. li. 50. James v. 16. David, even when he had enough to do with his own case, could nevertheless not forbear mentioning Zion in his prayer, Psalm li. 18.

7. It ought also to support you in your adversities, that ye may address God as your Father. Do wicked men boast of their noble parentage, ye have greater reason to boast, for ye are "born of God," John i. 13. Are ye afflicted, your Father regards your affliction: "his bowels are troubled for you, and he hath mercy on you," Jer. xxxi. 20. Psalm ciii. 13. Do ye not know "what and how ye should pray," or how ye should conduct before the throne, "the Spirit" of your Father "will help your infirmities," he will lead you to the

throne, and "pray for you with groanings that cannot be uttered." Doth it grieve you, that ye must remain so long a time absent from your Father, who is in heaven, and that ye are not yet taken up to him; well, your eldest brother Jesus "is gone before you," in order, as he saith himself, John xiv. 2, 3, "to prepare a place for you, and when he hath accomplished that work, he will come to you, and take you unto himself, that where he is, there ye may be also." Amen.

THE

FIRST PETITION

EXPLAINED.

XLVII. LORD'S DAY.

Mat. vi. 9. Hallowed be thy name.

Q. 122. *Which is the first petition?*

A. "Hallowed be thy name;" that is, grant us first rightly to know thee, and to sanctify, glorify and praise thee in all thy works, in which thy power, wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy and truth are clearly displayed; and further also, that we may so order and direct our whole lives, our thoughts, words and actions, as that thy name may never be blasphemed, but rather honoured and praised on our account.

"A SON honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts," Mal i. 6. It is the duty of children to honour their father: "Children, honour your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise," saith Paul, agreeably to the law of the Lord, Eph. vi. 1, 2, and this is also

the nature of right-tempered children. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Solomon exhibited noble evidences of this, and especially the Lord Jesus, the pattern of us all: "he was subject to his parents," Luke ii. 51. Therefore God also justly requires this of his people, Mal. i. 6. For he is their Father, and they are his children. Yea, he requires with greater justice that his children should honour him, than earthly fathers require it of their children, inasmuch as he excels earthly fathers in the highest degree in glory and sovereign authority, and his favoured people are more obligated to him than to their earthly fathers. Therefore the apostle saith Heb. xii. 9. "We had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?" Yea, the children of God, who know the honourableness of their Father, are pleased, and they esteem it their happiness, when he is honoured and glorified: "Their souls are then satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and they praise him with joyful lips," Psalm lxiii. 5. It is their principal aim, and they desire to direct all that they do, yea, even their "eating and drinking," to this end, as the apostle admonisheth, 1 Cor. x. 31. And since they behold so much honourableness and glory in God, that "he is exalted above all blessing and praise," Neh. ix. 5, and that they are in themselves too contracted and unable to glorify his name, therefore they cry and pray that he would grant them to do this, as the Saviour teacheth them to pray to the Father, "Hallowed be thy name."

The Saviour teaching his followers to acknowledge and address God, as their heavenly Father, enjoins upon them to pray in the first place, that his name may be hallowed and glorified, as the first and principal object, to which all the following petitions ought to be directed, as means; for we must, as we have taught on the forty-fifth Lord's day, divide the six petitions in such a manner, that the first exhibits the chief end, and the five following the means which lead to that end; for if we desire that the kingdom of God should come, his will be done, &c. it must only be to the end, that the Father's name may be glorified and hallowed.

In order rightly to understand this petition concerning the hallowing of God's name, we must attend to four particulars;

I. What the name of God, and particularly what the Father's name is.

II. How it is hallowed.

III. For what we pray here, and

IV. Why we must pray thus.

I. That the Lord God, being incomparably glorious, needeth no name; and that he hath nevertheless called himself by a name, that he might make himself better known, and distinguish himself more from idols; and that by his name, we must understand himself, as far as he makes himself, his perfections and excellencies known to the reasonable creature by his words and works, that he may be the God of the sinner, this we have shown upon the third commandment. Therefore the instructor explaining in this Lord's day the name of God, saith also, "that in all his works his power, wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy and truth are clearly displayed; in which we learn, as by his name, rightly to know him, to glorify and praise him." And his name denotes particularly in this petition, that he is the Father of believers, and therefore is become their Father in Christ, "in the midst of whom is his Father's name, and who makes his Father's name known to the men, who were given him," Exod. xxiii. 21. John xvii. 6.

II. Since the name of the Lord is holy, therefore we may not profane it, but it must be hallowed. To hallow (or sanctify) any thing denotes, (a) to make that which is unholy, holy; as sinners "are washed and sanctified," 1 Cor. vii. 11. (b) To set that which is common apart for a holy use: "Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, said the Lord to Moses," Exod. xiii. 1. (c) To acknowledge that which is holy to be so: "Sanctify the Lord in your hearts," 1 Pet. iii. 15. It is evident, that to hallow the Father's name doth not signify to make it holy, or to set it apart for a holy use: for it is essentially and incomparably holy: "There is none holy, as the Lord," saith Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. 2. But to hallow his name is to acknowledge it to be holy.

It is necessary to declare beforehand what the holiness of God is; and then how his name is hallowed. As "God's name is wonderful," Judges xiii. 18. "What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?" saith Agur, Prov. xxx. 4, so his holiness also is inconceivable and inexpressible. We say in a stammering manner, and as the book of God teacheth us, that the holiness of God is, (a) that most pure love, which God beareth to himself, to his perfections and excellencies, and to his honour, by which he is so immaculate, that he cannot say or do aught that militates against his perfections, and that he hath therefore a natural hatred to all that is sinful, and that opposeth him, and so "he is of purer eyes than to behold evil," Hab i. 13. (b) That becomingness and fitness of God's nature and conduct, that all that he doth is proper and unblamable, and we cannot censure him in any instance, but must ap-

prove of him in the highest degree: "My God," saith the Psalmist," I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not, and in the night season, and am not silent," What then? will he censure the Lord? no, all that he doth is right, therefore he submitted himself, and said, "but thou art holy," Psalm xxii. 2, 3. (c) The highness, incomparable glory, lustre and brightness which shines forth from his essence, perfections, virtues and works. Hear this from the mouth of Moses, Exod. xv. 11, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (d) His unchangeableness, whereby he continues the same that he is and was, in his essence and glory. Thus those four living creatures declare the holiness of God, when they cry, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come," Rev. iv. 8.

We may easily conceive now, that the name of God is hallowed, when his holy glory, and glorious holiness is declared, manifested, acknowledged and glorified. Thus "the four living creatures proclaiming the glory of the Lord, gave glory, and honour, and thanks to him," Rev. iv. 8, 9, as before that "the seraphs cried one to another, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is filled with his glory," Isaiah vi. 3.

The name of God is hallowed by the Lord himself, or by his creatures: God hallows his name (a) by his judgments, with which he punisheth the wicked; for by them he manifests his holy aversion from the sinner, and from his sins; he demonstrates thus his justice by inflicting on the sinner his righteous anger, he declares the truth of his threatenings, and he causes the wicked doer to experience his punitive power, and so the Lord causes the ungodly and all others to see that "he is a righteous Judge, and a God who is angry every day," Psalm vii. 11. "And a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth," as David speaks in his maschil, Psalm lxiii. 11. "When the Lord consumed the sons of Aaron by the fire, which went out from him, he was then sanctified and glorified before all the people," Lev. x. 2, 3. "When God executed judgments in Zidon, he was sanctified in her likewise," as he speaks, Ezek. xxviii. 22. (b) God also hallows his name by bestowing blessings and benefits upon his children, for he manifests thus in an illustrious manner his great power, wisdom, goodness, love, grace, mercy, and the truth of his promises to his people, so that they, and the wicked also behold the favourable hand of God toward them; "I will sanctify my great

name which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them, and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in them before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land," Ezek. xxxvi. 23, 24. (c) But doth God hallow his name in any instance, it is in that great and wonderful work of the redemption of sinners, that he gave his only Son to be their Surety, punished their sins in him, made them accepted in the Beloved, and hath given them the certain expectation of an inconceivable bliss. His name shines forth in this, even his power in effecting it, notwithstanding every opposition; his manifold wisdom in contriving such an admirable way; his goodness, grace, mercy and love to miserable sinners, in sending his only begotten Son for the reconciliation of his enemies; his justice, which the Surety hath fully satisfied, and his truth in executing his counsel of peace, and in fulfilling all his promises. And if aught shine forth in this work, it is his holiness; for by redeeming the sinner through his Son, he manifests his hatred of sin, and his love to himself and to his perfections, which were injured by sin; he hath glorified these by the satisfaction of his Son; and by virtue of that satisfaction he sanctifies his children, and shows that since he is satisfied, he will not demand the debt again. And thus the Lord of hosts is exalted in judgment, and God who is holy is sanctified in righteousness," Isaiah v. 16.

"The Lord hath made all things for himself," saith the wise king, Prov. xvi. 4. Therefore his creatures, both rational and irrational, were made in order to sanctify and glorify his name. Irrational creatures sanctify and glorify the name of the Lord: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth forth his handy work," &c. saith the sweet Psalmist, Psalm xix. 1—7. "As know the beasts and they shall teach thee: and fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee; or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee, and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these, that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?" Job. xii. 7—9. For although these several creatures do not utter any articulate words, they nevertheless show the reasonable creature "God's eternal power and Godhead, which we may understand and see clearly by means of these creatures," Rom. i. 20, his wisdom, "by which he hath made them all," and his goodness, by which "he hath filled the earth with good things," as David observed, Psalm civ. 24.

Every creature ought to contribute to the honour of its Maker, in proportion to the excellency with which he hath endued it. Rational creatures, to wit, angels and men, are the most excellent of all God's works, and therefore they ought to hallow the name of God more than others. David, filled with the praises of God, calls upon the angels to praise the Lord, Psalm ciii. 20. They did this also at an early period: "When the Lord laid the foundations of the earth, those morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," Job xxxviii. 7. "They are desirous of looking into the work of redemption," 1 Pet. i. 12. "The church makes known to them the manifold wisdom of God," Eph. iii. 20. "They praise God on account of it in the highest heavens," Luke ii. 13, 14. "They rejoice, when a sinner is converted," Luke xv. 7, 10, and they watch his Father's beck, to defend and serve him, Matt. xviii. 10. Heb. i. 14.

But as Christ did not receive angels, but men, in order to render them the children of God, therefore these are particularly obliged to hallow their Father's name. Men do this in and after this life: in this life they do it, when they are alone, and when they are with others. The children of God hallow and glorify his name when they are alone, (a) with the thoughts of their hearts, when they reflect with holy meditations on the acts of God, and his perfections of almightiness, wisdom, goodness, &c. when they look deep into them, admire, rejoice in them, extol them, and praise the Lord, on account of them: "My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord," saith David, Psalm civ. 34. (b) With words, with which they proclaim with joy the glory of the Lord before his face, and in his presence, that they may praise and extol him highly. "They speak thus by themselves of the works of his hand," with David, Psalm cxliii. 5, who, contemplating in the silent evening the great works of God, cried out to him, Psalm viii. 1—9. "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens." (c) With virtuous actions. They apply to his almighty power for help, they suffer themselves to be directed by his wisdom, they are enamoured of his goodness and mercy, they admire his justice in Christ, they trust in his truth, and they fear him with a childlike fear on account of his incomparable glory and holiness: "Sanctify the Lord of hosts," saith the prophet: but how? "Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread," Isaiah viii. 13. Doth it please him, according to his sovereignty, to chastise his children, they sanctify him by submitting to

him without contradiction: "My God," saith David, Psalm xxii. 2, 3, "I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest me not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy." Peter enjoins upon believers to "sanctify the Lord God in their hearts, when they suffer," 1 Pet. iii. 14, 15. (d) With good and holy intentions, aiming in all that they do, even in indifferent actions, at the glory of God, 1 Cor. x. 31. "Whether they eat or drink, or whatever else they do, doing all to the glory of God."

The children of God behold and perceive with pleasure so much glorious holiness and praiseworthiness in their Father, that they cannot be satisfied with sanctifying him by themselves, but they desire help; and therefore they do it also in the presence of others, that they also may do it. On this account they will speak of God, and of his exalted dignity to their neighbours, that they also may know the holy glory of God, may obtain a sense of his virtues, and be to his praise, as David in his psalm of praise would for this end "teach others the fear of the Lord," Psalm xxxiv. 11, and he "declared to them who feared God what God had done for his soul," Psalm lxvi. 16. 17. Yea, they will excite each other to praise his name together. Hear the sweet psalmist say again, Psalm xxxiv. 3, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." And that they may not do aught besides, they will endeavour to manifest in all their behaviour by their humility, selfdenial, and heavenly mindedness, that he is worthy to be sought, loved, feared and honoured, "letting their light so shine before men, that they may behold their good works, and glorify their Father who is in heaven," Matt. v. 16. 1 Peter, ii. 12. iii. 16.

But the name of the Father will be hallowed by his children still more after this life, when the blessed light of the divine holiness and glory shining upon them, and the blessed influence of the divine allsufficiency being shed abroad upon them immediately, they will with all the blessed angels and men proclaim his glory with all their might, and cause the heaven to resound for ever. See as it were a sketch of this their future work, Rev. iv. v. vii.

III. Behold, in this manner is the name of the Father hallowed by himself, by his creatures, and especially by his children. Truly a work which deserves that they should pray to the Father, that he would teach and enable them to do it: the Father also teacheth them this, (a) when he grants them rightly to know him by irradiating their understandings with his light, so that they see and behold him, his name, his holiness and virtues in all his works clearly and

with suitable attention. See how Paul prays for the believing Ephesians, that "God would give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of their understanding being enlightened," &c. Eph. i. 17—19. (b) When he enables them to praise and celebrate him by giving them much experimental and heartenlarging grace. The heart is sometimes sluggish, it experienceth itself listless, or is discouraged on account of manifold difficulties: but the Lord raises it up," he looses their sackcloth, turns their mourning into dancing, and makes them glad through his works, so that they triumph in the works of his hands," Psalm xcii. 4, "and he puts a new song in their mouths, even praise to their God," Psalm xl. 3. (c) The Father grants them to hallow his name also, when "he teaches them to do his will, and when his good Spirit leads them into the land of uprightness," as David prays Psalm cxliii. 10. And "they do thus order and direct their whole lives, thoughts, words and works, so that his name is not blasphemed, but honoured and praised on their account."

IV. These are the things which the children of God desire, when they offer up this petition to him. But why doth the Lord Jesus choose that they should pray thus? (a) "Praise is comely," Psalm cxlvii. 1. He is worthy on account of his transcendent glory, to be hallowed. As all things are of and by him, so all things ought to be referred back to him by hallowing him, and all other things, for which we pray, ought to serve to this end. God aims at this in all that he doth. The Father's children ought to be like him, and therefore to be "followers of God," Eph. v. 1. They have indeed been made his children, and "called, that they might show forth his praise and excellencies," Isaish xliii. 21. 1 Peter ii. 9. Yea, their Father's holiness and glory is also their holiness and glory. See Isaiah xxviii. 5. Ezek. xvi. 14, and therefore they must pray thus, if they shall pray aright for themselves. (b) They are pleased, when their Father is hallowed. How will they show that they are, but by their praying, like the church, Isaiah xxvi. 8, "The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee." (c) They know experimentally, that they are unable to hallow his name, as they ought. How shall they obtain an ability? only by calling on the Father from Psalm lxxi. 8, "Let my mouth be filled with thy praise, and with thy honour all the day." See also Psalm li. 15. (d) The Father will also grant this upon their praying: when "they cry to him with their mouth, he is extolled with their tongue," as the church speaks, Psalm lxvi. 17. They

pray indeed for the glorification of his name, in which he delights, and therefore he will hear that petition.

APPLICATION.

But, hearers, who, yea, who of you hallows the name of God thus? Yea, who hath a hearty desire to be enabled to glorify the name of God? indeed very few aim at this; for,

1. Many, though they say this ordinary lesson every day, known ot what they say: the most of you understand not what the name of God is, nor how it is hallowed. If we should ask you what ye understood by it, when ye said, "hallowed be thy name," would ye not be ashamed, and be utterly unable to say what ye meant? and be obliged to own that ye uttered barely words, without knowledge, and thus only provoked God by your praying? "O Lord," saith David, Psalm xcii. 5, 6, "how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep. A brutish man knoweth not: neither doth a fool understand this." It is then surely evident, that since ye do not understand this, ye do not hallow his name, yea, that ye have no inclination or desire to do it; for we cannot desire that of which we have no knowledge.

2. The most of you seek only the glorification of their own name. Is it not true, that it is your only aim to be esteemed, loved and feared by your neighbour? Ye will say this and that, make such and such a fair show, do this or that action, behave yourselves friendly, flatter your neighbour, and speak highly of yourselves with "Theudas, saying that ye are somebody," Acts v. 36, and with "Simon the Sorcerer, who said of himself that he was some great one," Acts viii. 9. Therefore ye inquire whether there be any who are pleased with you: and when ye perceive that there are, it delights your souls, and affords you a heartfelt pleasure; but doth any person despise you, "ye are "full of indignation at him," as "Haman was at Mordecai;" and though ye fare ever so well, it is nothing to you, as long as there is a "Mordecai, who will not make obeisance," to you, Esther v. 9—13. What think ye, when ye aim thus at your own glory, can ye then pray in truth, that the name of God may be hallowed?

3. Further, a person who is not born again, and adopted for a

child of God, will aim only at himself, and propose nothing but himself for his God. It is certain, that as God hath made all things for himself, so men ought also to do all things for the Lord's sake. Therefore when a man doth all things for himself, doth he not then thrust God, as it were, from his throne, and place himself in the seat of the Lord? Contemplate now yourselves, hearers, and see with what aims ye do all things. Why do ye eat and drink? why do ye clothe yourselves? why do ye labour? is it because it is the will of the Lord, that ye may be able to serve and glorify him better with your bodies and your spirits? surely no: this enters not into your thoughts: but ye yourselves are the great objects of all your undertakings. Ye eat and drink because ye are hungry, and because your meat and drink are pleasant to your taste; ye clothe yourselves, that ye may be warm, and may not be reproached, and ye labour, that ye may derive profit from it. When therefore ye are so entirely devoted to yourselves, and do all things for yourselves, is it possible that ye should truly desire, that the name of God should be hallowed?

4. Doth God himself glorify his name by benefits or judgments, there are few who will observe it: "Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see it," Isaiah xxvi. 10, 11. Yea, will ye not ascribe it to your own wisdom, or to chance, or to the actions of this or that person? "Ye say in your hearts, the power and the might of our hands hath gotten us this wealth," Deut. viii. 17. When we do not attend to God, but to ourselves, have we then the smallest desire, that the name of God should be hallowed?

5. Once more, consider your behaviour and conduct, when ye are alone, and when ye are with others, with respect to your imaginations, thoughts, words and actions. Do these indeed show that ye are intent upon glorifying the name of God? do they not tend to the dishonour and to the reproach of your Maker? do heathens and Papists lead worse lives than many of those who are called Christians? If those abandoned nations should behold your doings, would they not reproach your profession? and is not "the name of God blasphemed also on your account?" Rom. ii. 17—24. "Ye profess that ye know God; but in works ye deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." Thus speaks Paul to the ungodly of his time, Titus i. 16. Say then, how can ye pray in truth that the name of the Lord may be hallowed?

And is this so? it is glaringly evident that it is. Why then do ye call God your Father. Ye are certainly like the Jews, Isaiah i. 4, "children that are corrupters; for ye have forsaken the Lord, and have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger: ye are gone away backward." Is not your praying, that his name may be hallowed, only a mocking of the Lord? for ye do not mean what ye say: "Is it good that he should search you out? and as one man mocketh another, do ye so mock him?" Job xiii. 9. Alas! friends, ye who pray in this manner for the hallowing of God's name, ye abuse his name, and he will not hold you guiltless, as he threateneth, Exod. xx. 7. Ye pray that God's name may be hallowed; but if God should hallow his name according to your petition, would it not be to your destruction, as the fire consumed the sons of Aaron? Lev. x. 2, 3.

Will ye escape the wrath of God, behold your unhallowed conversation, and see how his indignation is kindled against you, that ye may come with fear and trembling to the Lord, and to his goodness, and may embrace his Son, in whom the name of God is hallowed, and may thus glorify him in this way of grace; for "the Lord waiteth, that he may be gracious unto you, and he will be exalted, that he may have mercy on you," as the prophet speaks, Isaiah xxx. 18.

But, children of the Father who is in heaven, who are especially obligated to hallow his name, how little do ye glorify him! Reflect how ye conduct, when ye are alone, with respect to your thoughts, words, actions, and designs; and how ye demean yourselves, when ye are with others, whether ye speak becomingly of God, whether ye stir others up to give glory to the God of Israel, and whether they can see by your actions, that God your Father is glorious, and worthy to be glorified? must ye not acknowledge that ye dishonour him more than ye glorify him? But what would I say? shall I speak harshly to you? no, ye are of yourselves too much grieved for your misconduct. Let your souls only confess their folly with a childlike humility, and glorify him in this respect, as Joshua required of Achan, Joshua vii. 19.

Is it your desire to hallow the Lord:

1. Be then intent upon it, and let it be your aim in all your doings. Why do we pray for a thing which we do not earnestly desire. Let us show then that we are not indifferent whether we be heard or not. To hallow the name of God is surely your happiness, pleasure and joy. With the spouse "ye are glad and rejoice, when ye remem-

ber his love more than wine," Song i. 4. In what else will your eternal bliss consist, but in hallowing and glorifying him. Have therefore a steadfast desire to this.

2. Endeavour to know wherein it consists to hallow his name, and what his name is. Reflect upon what we have said concerning it. Yea, seek to know your Father himself, as he hath revealed himself in his word, in his ways, and especially to your souls. Ye have in one way or another, like David, "seen him in the sanctuary, seeing his power and his glory," Psalm lxiii. 2. Continue in that light and in that sight of him, that ye may, "with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18. This would indeed fill your mouths with his praise, with his honour all the day.

3. Pray therefore heartily, earnestly, firstly and mostly that the Lord would give you grace to hallow his name; that he would fill your souls with his lovingkindness, and permit you to enjoy him, that "being satisfied, as with marrow and fatness, your mouths may praise him with joyful lips," Psalm lxiii. 5. The church cried, Psalm cvi. 4, 5. "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation: that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation: that I may glory with thine inheritance." Think not that your hearts, or mouths will be opened to praise his name, until God himself shall incline to you, and shall put a new song in your mouths. David, though a man after God's own heart, knowing this, said to the Lord, "Open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise," Psalm li. 15.

4. Let the hallowing of your Father's name be your first motive in all that ye do. Let it excite you to perform this or that work, that God can and will be glorified by it, and let this be your end and aim in all your undertakings, "that God may be glorified in all things, through Jesus Christ: to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever, Amen," 1 Peter iv. 11. We ought even to pray for all that we need for soul and body, that the Lord may be glorified thereby; for to this end doth the Saviour give us this petition in the first place, that we may for this purpose pray for other things also. The children of God end indeed with all that they do in the glory of God, and God is glorified in them by his several favours; but believers, who are yet inexperienced, do not begin so much from the glory of God, and they do not aim immediately and directly at

the divine glory in their actions; but they pursue their own happiness and comfort in the practice of godliness, and thus they glorify the name of God indeed indirectly, but not directly and intentionally; and therefore they must, according to the promise, Psalm xcii. 12—15, endeavour to "grow, that they may show that the Lord is upright."

5. Let this petition serve as an argument in all your prayers, that if the Lord will grant your holy requests, ye will then praise his name on account of it, and that it will certainly conduce to his glory, as David prayed in this manner, Psalm xxv. 11. "For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity." The church imitated him herein, Psalm lxxix. 9. "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake." This renders the person who prays bold, and strengthens his confidence, that God will grant him his requests, and it induceth the Lord to hear the prayer of his people; for he doth all things for his name's sake.

6. Deny your own name, not that ye are the children of God; for ye would then profane your Father's name: but all your own honour, profit, pleasure, and all that ye have of yourselves: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear: forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him." Thus ye are exhorted, Psalm xlv. 10, 11. Be not exceedingly grieved, when ye are dishonoured, as long as your Father's name is hallowed: "Jesus sought not his own glory," John viii. 50. "He endured the cross, despising the shame," saith the apostle, Heb. xii. 2. But let it pierce your hearts through with grief, when the name of God is unhallowed: "Hezekiah and his messengers rent their clothes, because the name of the Lord was blasphemed," 2 Kings xviii. 37. xix. 1. For it is your Father's name, which he hath put upon you also, and by which he glorifies you. How then can ye endure, that it should be reproached?

"Do wicked men blaspheme that worthy name, by which ye are called," James ii. 7, and "are ye reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified," 1 Pet. iv. 14. Ye are sanctified for your Father, for ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelious light," 1 Peter ii. 9. The Father

will regard your sanctification and glorification, and wo to him who dishonoureth you: "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye," Zech. ii. 8. He will answer all your petitions, he will sanctify you perfectly, and in sanctifying and glorifying you, he will manifest himself wonderful and glorious, when, according to 2 Thess. i 10, "he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe," Amen.

THE

SECOND PETITION

EXPLAINED.

XLVIII. LORD'S DAY.

Mat. vi. 10. Thy kingdom come.

Q. 123. *Which is the second petition?*

A. "Thy kingdom come;" that is, rule us so by thy word and Spirit, that we may submit ourselves more and more to thee; preserve and increase thy church, destroy the works of the devil, and all violence, which would exalt itself against thee; and also all wicked counsels devised against thy holy word; till the full perfection of thy kingdom takes place, wherein thou shalt be all in all.

ALTHOUGH the glory of God shines abroad in the clearest manner by means of all his great actions in nature, nevertheless it is still more manifested by his work of grace in the church. In the world "he doth great things past finding out, yea, and wonders without number: he removeth the mountains, and they know it not, and he overturneth them in his anger," &c. Job

ix. 5—10. This manifests him wonderful in his glory: "I know," saith the psalmist, "that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. He causeth the vapours to ascend," &c. Psalm cxxxv. 6, 7. All these actions of God manifest "his invisible things, his eternal power and Godhead," Rom. i. 20. But his glory beams forth still more in his church. David, calling upon "the children of the mighty to give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name," speaks not only of God's great works, of thunder, lightning, floods, and the painful calving of the hinds, but also of his glory, which he hath placed in his church, and in which he is praised on account of it more than elsewhere, saying, "but in his temple doth every one speak of his glory," Psalm xxix. 1—9. For he hath placed his children in his church, "that chosen generation, that royal priesthood, that holy nation, and peculiar people, that they should show forth the praises of him, who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light," 1 Peter ii. 9. He dwells and converseth there as in his house, and "he hath his fire and his furnace there," Isaiah xxxi. 9. Yea, in his church he is like a king in his palace, he appears there on his throne, the theatre of his glory, which shines forth particularly in his giving of his Son, that he might forgive sins through grace, and nevertheless remain just; for to this end "hath he set his Son forth" in his church, Rom. iii. 25, 26.

He therefore who desires that the Lord should be glorified, must also promote the glory of the church. Therefore Jesus, the great Advocate of his people, teaching the children of God to pray for the hallowing and glorifying of their Father's name, commands them to pray for the promoting and "the coming of his kingdom" in his church, because his name is hallowed chiefly in his church.

In order rightly to understand this second petition, we must attend to three particulars,

I. What the kingdom of God is.

II. How it comes, and

III. Why we must pray for this.

1. Believers, calling upon their Father, speak to him concerning his kingdom. A kingdom is a state of a people, in which one person hath as king, the supreme power and authority, whereby he governs the subjects according to certain laws, protects the good, and punisheth the evil.

Such a supreme authority is ascribed to God, and particularly to the Father, with which he rules as king. We read of a twofold

kingdom of God: we find first an universal, and then a particular kingdom. The universal kingdom, called also the kingdom of nature, of power, and of common providence, is the whole world, in which the Lord governs all his creatures, according to a certain order and laws which are innate in them, and also sometimes above and without those laws by miracles; and causes them to observe his beck and will, that he many manifest his supreme authority and sovereign power over them. All the creatures are subject to this jurisdiction of God: "The Lord hath established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all," saith David, Psalm ciii. 19. Even the great ones of the earth, the mightiest kings are subject to this dominion of the Lord. Although Pharaoh may attempt to shake off this yoke from himself and say, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go," Exod. v. 2, the great God and king, who is above all gods, will speedily compel him to acknowledge his sovereign power, and say, "The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked," Exod. ix. 27. Did the great Nebuchadnezzar think and say, that he was the supreme king, and the independent ruler of great Babylon, the Lord God manifested that he was nevertheless above him; for he caused "the kingdom to depart from that proud boaster; he was driven from men among the beasts, and a beast's heart was given him, until he knew that the heavens did rule, and until he blessed the Most High, and praised and honoured him who liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doth thou?" Dan. iv. The Lord is indeed "a king of kings," 1 Tim. vi. 15. The devil himself, though he is the god of this world, must submit with his angels to the dominion of the Lord, although it is contrary to his will. When the Son of God "commands those unclean spirits, they obey him," Mark i. 27. When "he doth not suffer them to speak," they dare not even mutter, Mark i. 34. They cannot enter into the swine, when he doth not permit them upon their request, Mat. viii. 31, 32.

But the Lord hath also a particular kingdom, called the kingdom of grace, in which he alone reigneth over his children, as his peculiar property above all other creatures, according to his free and royal law. This Christ calls "the kingdom of God and his righ-

teousness," and he saith that "all other things shall be added to it," Matt. vi. 33.

God the Father is the king of this kingdom of grace; for to him do believers speak, as we have shown before, in treating on the manner of addressing God in prayer. It is true, "the Son of God is the king of Israel," as Nathanael confessed with an upright mind, John i. 50. But when the Son of God prescribed this prayer to his people, he did not appear like a king, but like "one whom man despiseth, like a servant of rulers, and one whom the nation abhorred," according to the prophecy, Isaiah xlix. 7. As "he also made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man," Philip. ii. 7. Having afterwards ascended into heaven, and sitten at the right hand of God, he manifested himself a king, when he poured out the Holy Spirit; but he did this on the behalf of his Father, who appointed him his vicegerent, that he might govern his church with, by, and in him. For to this end "the Father anointed him," Psalm ii. 6, "gave him the throne of his Father David," Luke i. 32, "exalted him by his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins," Acts v. 31, "made him sit at his right hand, and gave him the promise of the Holy Ghost, to shed him forth, and made him thus Lord and Christ," Acts ii. 33—36. And so he reigns, as Mediator, in the name, and "to the glory of God the Father," as Paul teacheth, Philip. ii. 9—11. "Which kingdom he will deliver up to the Father again," 1 Cor. xv. 24.

Although many reprobates join themselves outwardly to his church, and are on that account called "Children of the kingdom," they are nevertheless not proper subjects, and shall therefore be banished and "cast out" of the kingdom, as the King saith, Matt viii. 12. But those only are proper subjects, who have been chosen by the Father, and given to his Son; who hath bought them with his blood for himself, hath subjected them to himself, and bestows upon them the benefits of the kingdom, "righteousness, peace and joy through the Holy Ghost," Rom. xiv. 17, and whom he governs by his word of the law and gospel with his Spirit. Thus God promised to his Son, that "he, as the anointed King of God, should have the elect heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession," Psalm ii. 6, 8, and also "a rod of his strength, that he might subdue his enemies to himself, and render them a willing people," Psalm cx. 2, 3, as they, affected in this manner, do also "join themselves to him," and do homage to him, "to be his servants," Isaiah lvi. 6.

This kingdom hath also its enemies. The devil hath exalted himself with his angels against the King, and hath erected the kingdom of darkness, in order to oppose the King, and the subjects of the kingdom of salvation; to whom Mahomet and his whole multitude have joined themselves, and also Antichrist, the whore of Babylon, with all the kings of the earth, who commit fornication with her; for "the coming of the man of sin, the son of perdition, is after the working of Satan," 2 Thess. ii. 3—9. Heretics also in general conspire with this power of hell; and that roaring lion, that he may the more easily devour the subjects of the Lord, stirs up traitors also within the kingdom of God, even all the false brethren in the church, and all the corruptions in the souls of the true subjects. But our great King will destroy him, with all that cleave to him: for "he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet," 1 Cor. xv. 25.

Although the kingdom of grace, with respect to the essentials of it, is always the same, nevertheless it must be considered, agreeably to the free dispensation of the King, in different situations. It is either the kingdom of the Old Testament, or of the New Testament, or of glory.

1. God erected his kingdom under the Old Testament, even in the beginning of the world, when he promised his Son, as "the seed of the woman," that he might cause him, as king, to "bruise the head of the seed of the serpent," Gen. iii. 15. He manifested himself also a king in the families of the patriarchs, until he adopted the posterity of Abraham for his subjects, and erected his kingdom in a public manner among them, and undertook to govern them himself, without an earthly king. Gideon, knowing this, "would not reign over Israel, nor suffer his son to reign over them," because "the Lord alone ought to reign over them," Judges viii. 23. When the children of Israel afterwards desired a king, it displeased the Lord, because "they rejected him, that he should not reign over them," 1 Sam. viii. 9, and therefore he indeed "gave them a king, but it was in his anger, and he took him away in his wrath," Hosea xiii. 11. And after this the Lord did, as it were, tolerate the kingly government among them. He himself had indeed acted in the most perfect manner, as their king: he had led them out of Egypt, had brought them to Horeb, had given them there his civil, ecclesiastical and moral laws, had gone before them in a pillar of fire and of cloud, had fed them with Manna from heaven, had given them water to drink out of the rock, had brought them into Canaan, subdued their enemies for them, and maintained his throne, as a king

who reigneth, on the ark of the covenant, "between the cherubims," Psalm xcix. 1. Although Christ was not then yet exalted to the kingly authority, he nevertheless then also manifested himself a king. He appeared then often as the angel of God's presence, he gave the law, went before Israel to lead them into Canaan, and appeared to Joshua, as "the Captain of the Lord's host." Yet all this was done with the encumbrance of a worldly sanctuary, and under darksome shadows of better things. But although that kingdom of the Old Testament was such an outward and material kingdom, it nevertheless included an inward and spiritual kingdom within it. They had then certainly the essential benefits of the kingdom of grace, as righteousness, peace and joy through the Holy Ghost. See only the Psalms of David, and the Song of Solomon.

2. The kingdom of grace exists particularly under the New Testament, in which the Lord God reigns over the elect Gentiles, as well as Jews, only by his Spirit with his word and sacraments, without the encumbrance of a worldly sanctuary: this is called emphatically, "the kingdom of heaven, and the kingdom of God, for which Joseph of Arimathea, waited," Mark xv. 43. Therefore God sent his Son into the world to be a king, John xviii. 37, who also bore the guilt of his subjects, reconciled them to God, overcame his and their enemies, "abolished the sacrifices and oblations, broke down the middle wall of partition," and maintains "his throne no longer on the ark, but hath Jerusalem, even his church, for his throne, and is seated at the right hand of his Father, angels, and authorities and powers being made subject to him," Dan. ix. 24—27. Col. ii. 13—15. Eph. ii. 13—19. Jer. iii. 16. 1 Pet. iii. 22.

3. The kingdom of God is however not yet complete, but it will be perfected after this life in glory; which takes place indeed partly now, when the souls of the subjects, separated from the body, become forthwith happy, and are taken up into paradise, even heaven; but it will take place fully in the resurrection of the dead, and in the final judgment, when they will "inherit the kingdom," in body as well as in soul, "and be taken up into the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall be ever with the Lord," Matt. xxv. 34. 1 Thess. iv. 17. Where God will then be all in all; for they will be round about the throne, and God will reign over them immediately, and render them happy for ever with his allsufficient influence, neither will any adversaries afflict them; for "death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire," Rev. xx. 14.

II. When the Lord Jesus teaches the children of God to pray for the coming of God's kingdom, he doth not then speak of God's

universal kingdom, but of the kingdom of grace as far as it was still to come: and therefore he doth not mention the kingdom of grace under the Old Testament, which was then ready to vanish away: but he requireth that we should pray for the coming of the New Testament, and of glory, which drew near even then: "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," said the Baptist, Matt. iii. 2. The Saviour saith the same thing, Matt. i. 15. The prophetsforetold from ancient times that it would come, according to which prophecies the believers "waited for that kingdom, with Joseph of Arimathea," Mark iv. 43.

This kingdom comes, either with respect to the church in general, or with respect to each sincere member of the church in particular. With respect to the church in general, the kingdom of God comes, (a) When the gospel of the kingdom is preached, where it was not before, and when it is published with more clearness than before. (b) When the enemies are destroyed, or restrained. (c) When eminent men are raised up, who promote the kingdom greatly. (d) When the church is improved in doctrine and life, and (e) When many submit themselves to the King in truth; for "the king's honour is in the multitude of people," Prov. iv. 28. Or, as the instructor saith, when "God preserves and increases the church, and destroys the works of the devil," &c.

If ye will rather, with many others, follow the order of time, and notice in what manner the Lord hath caused his kingdom to come from time to time in the world, observe then,

1. That the kingdom of God came, when Christ the king came into the world, preached the word among the Jews, confirmed it by his miracles, purchased the benefits of the kingdom by his obedience and sufferings, overcame death and the devil by his resurrection, arose to the throne at the right hand of the Father by his ascension into heaven, sent the Spirit of the kingdom down from his throne upon his apostles, and sent them into the world, to subdue, and gather his subjects to him: "If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils," said the King to the Jews, Matt. xii. 18, "then the kingdom of God is come unto you." When he was among them with his word and miracles, then "the kingdom of God was also within them," Luke xvii. 20, 21. He evidenced by his exaltation and the outpouring of his Spirit, that "God had made him both Lord and Christ," Acts ii. 33—36.

2. The kingdom of God came also, when the word of the kingdom was preached with power among the Gentiles, and received by many nations: When "he spake peace unto the heathen, he then

also ruled from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth," Zech. ix. 10.

3. We add also to this, that it came, when "he sent forth his armies," even the Romans, "who destroyed the Jews, and burnt up the city," as the king foretold, because "they would not have that he should reign over them, and had slain him and his people," Matt. xxii. 7. Luke xix. 37. Then "they saw him, sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven," Matt. xxvi. 64. For when the Lord punisheth and judgeth a people, he is then said "to come on the clouds," Isaiah xix. 1.

4. When Christ came in this manner with his kingdom in the world, "the kings of the earth set themselves against him," and sought by the ten wellknown heathen persecutions to root out the remembrance of his name from the earth. But God, who "had anointed his king," and had promised him, that "he would give him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession," Psalm ii. 6, 8. did by means of Constantine the Great, the first Christian emperour, destroy those tyrants and their tyranny, and he "compassed his people about with joyful songs of deliverance," and gathered also many kings of the earth to himself: for then "the dragon was cast out into the earth, and the strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ came," Rev. xii. 9, 10.

5. The kingdom of God came in an exceedingly glorious and illustrious manner in the reformation of the church; for then the gospel, which had been long obscured by the Romish additions, was clearly and powerfully explained and preached, by which means even many kings were induced to shake off the yoke of Antichrist and submit themselves to Christ. See this represented in a vision, Rev. xiv. 6.

6. These things have happened already, and we enjoy now yet the blessed fruits of them: therefore we must not pray, but praise the Lord for them. But the kingdom of God, for which we must still pray, will come when he will give more life, and a greater portion of his Spirit, when he will convert Jews and Gentiles, and subdue the Turks and Antichrist. Although we cannot determine the measure, nor the manner, nor the extent of this event, nor the time when it will happen, we nevertheless see the matter itself foretold, Rom. xi. 25—29, Rev. xvi. xviii. xix. xx.

7. But this kingdom will come perfectly in the day of judgment, when Jesus the King will cast all the ungodly into the fire of hell,

and "conduct his subjects into the kingdom of his Father, where they will shine as the sun; and then he will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and God" will influence all the blessed immediately, and thus be "all in all," Matt. xiii. 41—43. xxv. 31—46. 1 Cor. xv 24—28.

When the kingdom of God comes thus with respect to the church in general, it comes then also with respect to each member in particular, and each receives his particular advantage by it, and indeed (a) When God delivers the elect sinner out of the power of darkness, and translates him into the kingdom of his dear Son," as Paul speaks, Col. i. 13. Then "the King" comes and "rides prosperously in his majesty, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness," in his heart, Psalm xlv. 4. But the believer doth not pray for this, because he is already delivered. (b) When God endues him with so much power and vigour, that he exerts a manly holiness, and fights valiantly against his spiritual enemies, and treads them under his feet, saying with a holy magnanimity, like Paul, 1 Cor. vi. 12. "I will not be brought under the power of any." (c) He sometimes visits him with his kingly grace, shows him his love, reveals his glory, and "makes with his Father his abode" in the heart of the person who loves him. as he promiseth, John xiv. 21, 23. And he thus, "rules him by his word and Spirit, so that he submits himself more and more to the Lord," as the catechism explains this matter, according to the scripture. (d) But finally, this kingdom comes to him, when the King glorifies him, and conducts him into his blessed kingdom, first in death, with respect to his soul, commanding "the angels to carry his soul into Abraham's bosom," that he may "be with the King in Paradise," Luke xvi. 22. xxiii. 43, and afterwards in the resurrection, Psalm xvii. 15. Matt. xxv. 34.

III. So far then as the church, and the children of God do not yet enjoy the coming of God's kingdom, they are bound to pray, that it may come to them; for (1) They are the children of the King, and it is therefore natural to them to desire that their Father may be manifested as king, and rule over all. This induced the psalmist to proclaim before the Messiah, the antitype of Solomon, "Blessed be his glorious name, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory," Psalm lxxii. 19. (2) Their Father's name is hallowed and glorified, when his kingdom comes: see Prov. xiv. 28. Therefore they who pray in truth that his name may be hallowed, ought also to pray that his kingdom may come. (3) The glory of the kingdom should induce them to pray that it may come: for it is a most righteous kingdom, and the King doth no iniquity; it is a

kingdom of incredible riches; the greatest peace, contentment and happiness is enjoyed in it. (4) Believers ought certainly to love their neighbour: they do also love him: shall not that love then urge them to pray for him, that the kingdom of God may come to him also? see how Paul did this for Agrippa, Acts xxvi. 29. David prayed thus, and desired that every citizen of Jerusalem should imitate him therein, Psalm cxxii. (5) They long much for the perfection of God's kingdom. This will surely induce them to cry, "Even so, come Lord Jesus," Rev. xxii. 20. (6) They have learned by experience, that they are unable to effect any thing for this purpose: their numerous enemies are too powerful for them. What shall they then do but sigh with Jehoshaphat. 2 Chron. xx. 12. "O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us: neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee."

APPLICATION.

But, hearers, who of you prays that the kingdom of God may come? I know that there are few, and perhaps there are none who have not learned to say this petition after others, and they will repeat this lesson day by day, as if that were praying: while many nevertheless know not what they say, and they speak without heart, and not to God, who is far from them, and a stranger to them. But who is so solicitous for the coming of this kingdom, that his soul prays for it with hearty longings.

Ye surely are not, (a) who suffer your lusts, the world, and the devil to rule over you, and who follow whatever your vile hearts suggest: doth the world, urged by the devil, propose and command aught, as honourable, pleasant and profitable, ye will by all means obey them, and will not so much as listen to the great King. Ye have indeed suffered yourselves to be overcome by those vile and evil lords, and are become their servants, 2 Peter ii. 15. For "ye walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind," Eph. ii. 2, 3. How should ye then pray for this kingdom? ye regard only the kingdom of dark-

ness. (b) Neither do ye pray for this kingdom, who oppose the servants and subjects of it, who reproach them, and set yourselves in all things against them, as enemies; "Is not the just and upright man laughed to scorn, and is he not a despised lamp in the thought of him that is at ease?" Job xii. 4, 5. If ye can harm and grieve them in any respect, ye will not forbear to do it. And how do many endeavour to abridge the privileges of the church, that they may lord it over her! this is done by wicked magistrates, who seek to usurp the whole government of the church, when God hath nevertheless anointed his Son king of Zion, his holy hill," Psalm ii. 6. And unfaithful watchmen do not act better, "who make the hearts of the righteous sad with lies," Ezek. xiii. 22, "smite them, and wound them" Song v. 7. Yea, "it grieves them exceedingly, when there comes a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel," Neh. ii. 10. Why do men pray for the coming of this kingdom, when they labour so against it? (c) We know indeed that many would be ashamed to gainstand the King and his people, in such a malicious manner: but what do ye do for the good of the kingdom? even "the nobles will not put their necks to the work of the Lord," to assist in building Jerusalem, Neh. iii. 5. Ye are not concerned whether the church fare well or ill: like Gallio men do not care for these things: "This is Zion," say they, "whom no man seeketh after," Jer. xxx. 17. "They are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph," Amos vi. 6. It is too much trouble, yea, it is a loss to do something for the great King. What think ye, are ye in earnest, when ye pray, Thy kingdom come? (d) Are there any who pray for this kingdom, ye do not, who bar your hearts against the King's sharp arrows of conviction relative to your condition and your sins. Is it not true, when a word is spoken on the King's behalf, which affects you, that ye then close your hearts, harden them, and endeavour to excuse yourselves, that ye may not be reduced to a strait, and be obliged to receive him into your souls, and suffer him to dethrone all your reigning sins? Do ye then pray in truth, Thy kingdom come? Do ye not pray and labour against it? and do ye not say with the wicked Jews, Luke xix. 14. "We will not have this man to reign over us?"

If it be thus with you, the kingdom of God is not then come to you with power, but ye are still out of it. "without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world," Eph. ii. 12. Ye are yet "under the power of darkness," Col. i. 13, and "in the snare of the devil, in which he takes you captive at his will,"

2 Tim. ii. 26. Are ye not in the kingdom of grace, ye never will, if ye remain in your present condition, enter into the kingdom of glory, but shall, like other "children of the kingdom, be cast out into utter darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," Mat. viii. 12.

Whither then, O sinner, wilt thou flee? stop short in thy career, which leads to destruction, and recover thyself out of the snare of the devil. Return, it is still time, the Lord God still calleth thee, that thou shouldest "turn to him, and be saved," Isaiah xlv. 22. Give ear to his word, be no longer rebellious, but suffer thyself to be "taken captive by him, that he may cause" thee, who hast hitherto been "rebellious, to dwell with him," Psalm lxviii. 18.

But ye, children of the great King,

1. Employ yourselves in contemplating the glory of this kingdom: "The Lord is great, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge. Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof: mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following," Thus ye are admonished, Psalm lxxxvii. 3. Your Father, the God of heaven and of earth, is alone the king there: he suffers no creature to reign in his stead; his own Son, your Saviour, him only he hath exalted at his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour. He hath made you children of a King, yea, "kings and priests unto God and his Father," Rev. i. 6, though ye were of your father, the devil, and sinners of the Gentiles. It was formerly the privilege of the Jews only, to have the kingdom of God among them; but he hath now brought you also, who dwell at the ends of the earth, nigh. Yea, "behold, Rahab and Babylon know the Lord: the Philistine and Tyrian, with the Ethiopian is born there, and it is yet said of Zion, This and that man is born in her," Psalm lxxxvii. 4, 5. "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles, and laud him, all ye people," Rom. xv 10, 11. There was anciently "no people, that had such righteous statutes and judgments, as Israel," Deut. iv. 8. But although their ecclesiastical law was so good, and so great a blessing to them, informing them what their King would do for their salvation, it was nevertheless "a yoke, which they could not bear," Acts xv. 10. Ye are freed from that yoke, and ye stand in the liberty, wherewith the King hath made you free. The Lord had then indeed his throne on the ark, and dwelled between the cherubims; but now "the ark

comes not any more to mind, Jerusalem itself is now the throne of the Lord," Jer. iii. 16, 17. What kingly privileges and bounties doth the great King bestow on you! "All things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceedingly great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust," 2 Peter i. 3, 4. The King caresses, "kisses" his subjects, "leads them into his chambers, like his spouse, brings them into his banquettinghouse, and his banner over them is love," Song i. 2, 4. ii. 4. And these things are only a foretaste, and the first fruits of the Spirit: what will it be then hereafter, when ye shall be fully satiated with the lovingkindnesses of the Almighty! "O come then, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms: for the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods," Psalm xcv. 1—3.

2. But behold how the kingdom of God is still obscured by many miseries and sins. The man of sin, the son of perdition is not yet utterly destroyed; he still tyrannizes in many places over the heritage of the Lord: "The kings and princes of the earth, who have given their power to the beast, still set themselves, and take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed." Wherever they can, they oppress, spoil and banish the people of the Lord. And how sad is it even within the kingdom of the Lord! how many traitors and hypocrites are there to be found in it! how is the truth, the stability of the kingdom undermined! now also "the children of our mother are angry with us," Song i. 6. We see no more that agreement to serve the Lord with one consent, and to annoy the kingdom of Antichrist, and of his master the devil; but men tear each other's bowels. How little doth the word profit them! it is only now and then, and here and there. An imagination that they are alive, when they are dead, and a spiritual lukewarmness (for men are neither cold nor hot) pervades the kingdom of God. And how lean are even the sons and daughters of the King! Ignorance, darkness, the power of corruptions and listlessness with regard to seeking the Lord in the most earnest manner, and to live with and in him in secret, prevails in many: "The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!" Lam. iv. 2. We ought to see all this and more, to be affected with it, and to mourn over it, as Ezra and Nehemiah did in their time, Ezra ix. Neh. i.

3. Represent to the King in earnest prayers the misery of his subjects, that he may befriend them, whom he hath purchased for himself: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem," as David adviseth, Psalm cxxii. 6. Ye who are members, do ye not suffer, when those who are members of the same body with you, suffer? when ye pray for the church, ye pray then also for yourselves. Ye are perhaps yourselves in an evil plight, how shall ye be delivered out of it, except by hearty prayers? Ye have by your unbecoming conversation contributed to spoil the beauty of Israel; will ye not then seek to restore it to its proper lustre by your prayers? why else are ye commanded to pray, "Thy kingdom come?" Or have ye now so much to do with your own case, that ye forget the people of the Lord? David did not act so, when he was greatly distressed on account of his sins, and prayed for pardon; for he thought then also on Zion and Jerusalem: "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem," said he to the Lord, Psalm li. 18. "Remember then the Lord afar off, and let Jerusalem come into your minds."

4. Doth the Lord hear you, thank him for it. Doth the Lord contend any where against antichrist; doth he raise up persons in the church or state, who seek heartily the good of the kingdom; doth he bring his word and Spirit to any place, and convert any persons; doth he bestow his kingly bounties upon his courtiers, the children of the King; praise him then with your hearts, and in a hearty manner. See how king David engaged in this duty, Psalm lxvi. xlvii. xlviii. lxxii. lxxxvii. and in other psalms. The coming of his kingdom must conduce to his glory; therefore this petition is joined to the first.

5. Do not only pray and give thanks for this kingdom, but labour also to promote it. Magistrates should, as the Lord commandeth, not only submit to "the Son, and kiss him, but should also serve him," and order all things for his glory, Psalm ii. 10—12. "The watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem ought never to hold their peace day nor night. Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence; and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth," Isaiah lxii 6, 7 Yea, every subject ought cheerfully to exert himself, in proportion to his abilities, in favour of this kingdom, especially to convert others, that he may gain people for the King; even the women ought not to refuse their service: "The women of Israel span for the tabernacle, and brought their looking-glasses, to serve as materials for the brazen laver," Exod. xxxv. 25. 26. xxxviii. 8. "The daughters of Shallum helped to

This kingdom hath also its enemies. The devil hath exalted himself with his angels against the King, and hath erected the kingdom of darkness, in order to oppose the King, and the subjects of the kingdom of salvation; to whom Mahomet and his whole multitude have joined themselves, and also Antichrist, the whore of Babylon, with all the kings of the earth, who commit fornication with her; for "the coming of the man of sin, the son of perdition, is after the working of Satan," 2 Thess. ii. 3—9. Heretics also in general conspire with this power of hell; and that roaring lion, that he may the more easily devour the subjects of the Lord, stirs up traitors also within the kingdom of God, even all the false brethren in the church, and all the corruptions in the souls of the true subjects. But our great King will destroy him, with all that cleave to him: for "he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet," 1 Cor. xv. 25.

Although the kingdom of grace, with respect to the essentials of it, is always the same, nevertheless it must be considered, agreeably to the free dispensation of the King, in different situations. It is either the kingdom of the Old Testament, or of the New Testament, or of glory.

1. God erected his kingdom under the Old Testament, even in the beginning of the world, when he promised his Son, as "the seed of the woman," that he might cause him, as king, to "bruise the head of the seed of the serpent," Gen. iii. 15. He manifested himself also a king in the families of the patriarchs, until he adopted the posterity of Abraham for his subjects, and erected his kingdom in a public manner among them, and undertook to govern them himself, without an earthly king. Gideon, knowing this, "would not reign over Israel, nor suffer his son to reign over them," because "the Lord alone ought to reign over them," Judges viii. 23. When the children of Israel afterwards desired a king, it displeased the Lord, because "they rejected him, that he should not reign over them," 1 Sam. viii. 9, and therefore he indeed "gave them a king, but it was in his anger, and he took him away in his wrath," Hosea xiii. 11. And after this the Lord did, as it were, tolerate the kingly government among them. He himself had indeed acted in the most perfect manner, as their king: he had led them out of Egypt, had brought them to Horeb, had given them there his civil, ecclesiastical and moral laws, had gone before them in a pillar of fire and of cloud, had fed them with Manna from heaven, had given them water to drink out of the rock, had brought them into Canaan, subdued their enemies for them, and maintained his throne, as a king

who reigneth, on the ark of the covenant, "between the cherubims," Psalm xcix. 1. Although Christ was not then yet exalted to the kingly authority, he nevertheless then also manifested himself a king. He appeared then often as the angel of God's presence, he gave the law, went before Israel to lead them into Canaan, and appeared to Joshua, as "the Captain of the Lord's host." Yet all this was done with the encumbrance of a worldly sanctuary, and under darksome shadows of better things. But although that kingdom of the Old Testament was such an outward and material kingdom, it nevertheless included an inward and spiritual kingdom within it. They had then certainly the essential benefits of the kingdom of grace, as righteousness, peace and joy through the Holy Ghost. See only the Psalms of David, and the Song of Solomon.

2. The kingdom of grace exists particularly under the New Testament, in which the Lord God reigns over the elect Gentiles, as well as Jews, only by his Spirit with his word and sacraments, without the encumbrance of a worldly sanctuary: this is called emphatically, "the kingdom of heaven, and the kingdom of God, for which Joseph of Arimathea, waited," Mark xv. 43. Therefore God sent his Son into the world to be a king, John xviii. 37, who also bore the guilt of his subjects, reconciled them to God, overcame his and their enemies, "abolished the sacrifices and oblations, broke down the middle wall of partition," and maintains "his throne no longer on the ark, but hath Jerusalem, even his church, for his throne, and is seated at the right hand of his Father, angels, and authorities and powers being made subject to him," Dan. ix. 24—27. Col. ii. 13—15. Eph. ii. 13—19. Jer. iii. 16. 1 Pet. iii. 22.

3. The kingdom of God is however not yet complete, but it will be perfected after this life in glory; which takes place indeed partly now, when the souls of the subjects, separated from the body, become forthwith happy, and are taken up into paradise, even heaven; but it will take place fully in the resurrection of the dead, and in the final judgment, when they will "inherit the kingdom," in body as well as in soul, "and be taken up into the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall be ever with the Lord," Matt. xxv. 34. 1 Thess. iv. 17. Where God will then be all in all; for they will be round about the throne, and God will reign over them immediately, and render them happy for ever with his allsufficient influence, neither will any adversaries afflict them; for "death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire," Rev. xx. 14.

II. When the Lord Jesus teaches the children of God to pray for the coming of God's kingdom, he doth not then speak of God's

of his kingly authority: "When every man in Israel did what was right in his own eyes, then there was no king in Israel," Judges xvii. 6.

"The Lord is a great God, and a king above all gods," Psalm xcv. 3. And therefore he also is "the only Lawgiver, who can save and destroy," James iv. 12. All the creatures are under his control, and he hath power to govern them according to his will and his laws: "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou?" Thus the great "Nebuchadnezzar praised him who liveth for ever," Dan. iv. 34, 35. He hath as king of the whole earth, given the law of nature to all his irrational and inanimate creatures, which they also obey: "Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants," as David speaks to the Lord, Psalm cxix. 90, 91. But as king of his rational creatures, he hath given them particularly his "royal law," that he may cause them to "love him and their neighbour," James ii. 8. But as he is especially the king of his children in the kingdom of grace, therefore he gives them the most righteous laws and statutes, which they, as his freemade subjects, are bound to observe, and they glory that "the Lord is their Judge, their Lawgiver, and King, who will save them," Isaiah xxxiii. 22. And they are also ready and "exceedingly willing" to do his will, as it is foretold of them, Psalm cx. 3. Yea, they pray that their King would enable them and others to do it, when they pray, "Thy will be done," &c.

The Lord Jesus had commanded believers to pray that the name of God might be hallowed, and for this end also that his kingdom might come. In order now to promote the coming of his kingdom, he requires that they should pray in the third petition that they, and all the inhabitants of the earth may do the will of the Lord, as those who are in heaven do it.

In this petition we must inquire,

I. What the will of God is.

II. How it is done in earth, after the example of those who are in heaven.

III. What we desire with this petition, and

IV. Why we must pray thus.

I. The will of God, and particularly the will of the Father, the King, is the love which he beareth to himself, and to his glory, and for which he doth, according to his sovereignty, appoint and command whatsoever he pleaseth. "Our God is in the heavens, he hath done whatsoever he pleased," Psalm cxv. 3. It is distinguished into the will of his decree and of his command. The will of the decree is God's eternal counsel and purpose, whereby, before the foundation of the world, he decreed and resolved with and in himself what he would do and permit in time "He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." saith the apostle, Eph. i. 2. The will of the command is that which God hath expressed in his commands, by which he declares what he will have his reasonable creatures do and forbear: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification," saith Paul, 1 Thess iv. 3. We must nevertheless not understand this so, as if there were a twofold will, or a twofold operation of the will, the one distinct from the other, in God; for God, being simple, or uncompounded, there canno be any diversity in him; and therefore there is but one simple will in him, yea, his will is the willing God himself. But as we are not simple, and cannot comprehend God with one single act of our understanding, and as God's simple will is exercised about a twofold object, decreeing one thing, and commanding another, therefore we distinguish in this manner between the will of the decree, and the will of the command. Let none imagine that the will of the decree militates against the will of the command; for God hath also decreed what he would command. God commands Abraham, in order to try him, to offer up his son Isaac, and he had decreed that he should not offer him up. This, we would say, militates. It appears so: it militates also to offer and not to offer; but the will of the decree, that he should not offer, doth not therefore militate against the will of the command, that he should offer, as they would, if God himself would effect the will of the command, as he effects the will of the decree, and if he had not also willed and resolved by his decree, that he would command him to offer his son, and nevertheless would hinder him from doing it. But God decreed that Abraham should not offer up his son, and that he would nevertheless command him to do it, not that it should be done, but that he might prove him; and he resolved withal that he would hinder him from doing it: and so the will of the command is subordinate to the will of the decree. Now we know that things which are contrary to one another do indeed militate against each other, but not things that are subordinate to one another: and we

do not distinguish the will of God thus without reason: for the word of God affords us examples of such a distinction, as we have seen from Eph. i. 11. 1 Thess. iv. 3, and because the will of the decree is not the rule of our conduct, since it is unknown to us, but the will of the command, which God hath prescribed to us. We shall otherwise destroy all difference between virtue and vice, as appears sufficiently in the example of the Antinomians, or adversaries of the law; for though they commit ever so many sins, they will not repent of them, but imagine that they must acquiesce in the will of God, who hath decreed them. And this issues at last in a total denial of a Godhead, and of our obligation to the law, which is given to us.

II. With respect to the will of God, we must pray "that it may be done in earth, as it is in heaven." The will of God is done by God himself, or by his children and the subjects of his kingdom. God himself doth not do the will of his command except so far, that he gives his Spirit to men, in order that they may do it; but he doth the will of his decree, which is the plan that he hath devised, according to which he doth powerfully and unchangeably effect all things: "He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," saith Paul, Eph. i. 11. He saith himself, Isaiah xlvi. 10. "My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure."

As God the Lord doth the will of his decree, and not the will of his command, so the children of God do the will of his command, and not so much the will of his decree: for the command of God, and not his decree, is the only rule of their actions. It is true, they must submit to the calamitous evils which he inflicteth upon them by his providence, according to his decree, as Jesus, and the church at Cesarea did, Luke xxii. 42 Acts xxi. 14. And they must entreat God by their prayers to bestow his decreed blessings, with Daniel, Dan ix. 2, 3. Yea they ought with Isaiah to proffer themselves, as instruments, to execute the decree of God, that they may serve his counsel, Isaiah vi. 8—10. But this is not doing the will of the decree, but the will of the command, which enjoins on us to do thus; for the decree of God doth not bind and oblige man, but his command which he hath given to him. God had decreed and promised, that he would show great favour to his people, and he commanded them to pray for that favour, which he had decreed and promised, in order that his decree and promise might be fulfilled, Ezek. xxxvi. 36, 37. And it behooved them to do thus, not the will of the decree, but the will of the command. Thus the instructor also explains this petition, when he saith that the will of God is done

by obeying it, which therefore respects a command and injunction that is obeyed.

The will of the command requires that we should believe all that God reveals, do all that he commands, abstain from all that he forbids, and endure patiently all the calamitous evils that he inflicts on us. Which we perform in truth, and in such a manner as is acceptable to the Lord, when (a) "We renounce our own will." Though our will be ever so right and good, if it nevertheless oppose the will of our Father, we must then submit our own will to his will, yea, we must not will any thing, though ever so good and necessary, and must have no will but God's, and we must lose our will in his. So the Saviour acted with his own will, though it was perfectly holy, "saying, Father, if thou be willing remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will but thine be done," Luke xxii. 42. We ought more especially to renounce our will on account of God's will, which is only good, because our will is evil and perverse through sin, and "a will of the flesh and mind," Eph. ii. 3, and also "enmity against God," Rom. viii. 7. If we shall do the will of God, we must then renounce our own will, forsake and mortify it, and thus cut off our hand and foot, and pluck out our eye," Mark ix. 43—48, for "it is impossible to serve two masters," the will of God, and our own will, Matt. vi. 44. (b) We do the will of God by surrendering ourselves to him, and becoming servants of him and of his will, that we may do his will only: "We join ourselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to be his servants," Isaiah lvi. 6. We proffer ourselves to him for this end with Samuel, and with the Messiah, 1 Sam. iii. 10. Psalm xl. 7, 8, and we give ourselves to the Lord, as those who were delegated by the great ecclesiastical council of Jerusalem, Acts xv. 26, and as those of Macedonia, "first gave themselves by the will of God to the Lord," and afterwards to those who collected their alms, 2 Cor. viii. 4. (c) To doing the will of God belongs also doing his commands in obedience to him. It is not enough to forsake the evil, which is forbidden, and to perform the good that is commanded; but this must be done in obedience to God, and because it is his will: "Servants must be obedient to them that are their masters: but not with eyeservice, as menpleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart," Eph vi. 5—7.

If we shall do the will of God in a manner that is acceptable to him, we must do it as those who are in heaven. In the address of the Lord's prayer we read of heavens in the plural,* but here only of

* This is agreeable to the Dutch translation.

heaven, and so of the third heaven. God and his Son are there, although he was not ascended thither, when he prescribed this prayer; there also are the spirits of just men made perfect, and particularly the holy angels, who have their habitation in heaven, which the rebellious angels, the devils forsook, Jude, vrs. 6. Therefore those who continue to stand, are called "the angels of heaven," Matt. xxiv. 36, and are said to be "in heaven," Mark xii. 26. The souls of the blessed do indeed the will of God perfectly in heaven, and "serve him day and night," Rev vii. 15, and the angels also with them, Rev. v. 11. And so the souls of the blessed can be our patterns: but we ought rather to have respect here with the instructor to the pattern of the angels, since they especially are the servants of God, who minister to him, and to believers; for they observe his will and beck, that they may defend his favourites: "Their angels do always behold in heaven the face of my Father, which is in heaven," saith Jesus, Matt. xviii 10. For this purpose they descend from heaven, and ascend thither again, Luke ii. 13—15. John i. 52. These angels do (a) the will of God in all things. David, exciting them to praise the Lord, saith, "Bless the Lord, all ye his hosts, ye ministers of his that do his pleasure," Psalm ciii. 20, 21. (b) Willingly, readily, frequently, and faithfully. Therefore they are represented to us as winged, and as "flying," Dan. ix. 21, and "their appearance as burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps," Ezek. i. 13. (c) Perfectly, without any sinful defect, which doth not enter into heaven. God confirmed them in their holy and happy estate, after they had fulfilled the season allotted them for the trial of their obedience. The will of God must be done on earth as they do it, (1) By all or all kinds of men, who, as it was foretold, are brought to the kingdom of God, and who will be brought to it hereafter, that the Son of God may "rule from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth" Psalm lxxii. 8. (2) In all things, which God reveals or commands, with David, who said, Psalm cxix. 128, "I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way." (3) Willingly, readily, fervently, and faithfully, "not being slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," Rom. xii. 10. (4) Perfectly, not only with a perfection of parts, but also of degrees. It is true, no man attains to this perfection on earth; yet it is, and remains the duty of believers to abstain altogether from sinning: they desire to be perfect, and "follow after it," with the apostle, Philip. iii. 12—14 and they will attain to it after this life, as a consequence of their prayers.

III. When we speak thus to God in spirit and in truth, we do then pray.

1. That God would "grant" that we may renounce our own will, and obey his will, which is only good, without murmuring, in all things, each in his particular calling, wherein God hath set him," as the instructor explains this petition. God grants this, when he regenerates the sinner according to his will, and renews him after his image, and puts his law and fear into his heart; whereby he sees the detestable rebellion of his will, and the goodness of God's will, and becomes inclined to die to himself, and live to God; for which end he yields himself unto God, that he may "obey the Lord according to his will from the heart," Rom. vi. 17. But the children of God, who are already regenerated, do not pray thus for themselves, but that he would grant this to them still more; which he doth by causing them to see from time to time the equity of his will, so that their souls become enamoured of it. He doth their own will, renders them willing, and causeth them to do also his will in all things. David prayed for this, Psalm cxliii 10, "Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God; thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness," Paul also desired this, for the Colossians, Col. i 9—11. The Lord also promiseth to bestow this by his Spirit, Ezek. xxxvi. 27, and "he works in them both to will and to do," Phil ii. 13.

2. That God would likewise grant this to all, or all kinds of men. The children of God seeing the equity, and blessedness of doing God's will, are grieved that there should be a single person, who doth not do the will of God in this most hearty and perfect manner. They wish with Paul, "that all men were almost and altogether such as they are, excepting their bonds of sin and misery, Acts xxvi. 29. They wish that the will of God were done as generally by all men on earth, as it is by all the angels in heaven. They pray for this so much the more, because it hath been foretold, that "the Lord would turn to the people a pure language, that they might all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent," Zeph. iii. 9. They desire that their petition should conduce to the fulfilment of his promise.

IV. The Saviour prescribed this petition to believers, and commanded them to make use of it for certain reasons. For (a) it is a petition, that the will of their Father may be done. What right-tempered child will not earnestly desire that his father's will should be done by all? (b) God's name is hallowed, when his will is done: "Herein," saith the Son of God "is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit," John xv. 8. Therefore he who prays in truth

that his Father's name may be hallowed, will find himself constrained to pray also that his will may be done. (c) The kingdom of God doth then also come; for his kingly glory and dominion are never manifested more than when all his subjects do his will. We cannot therefore pray for the coming his kingdom, unless we also pray, that his will may be done. (d) All the children of God have an insatiable desire to do the will of God: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," so they can all say with Paul, Rom. vii. 22. How should they then forbear to pray with David, Psalm cxix. 35. "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein do I delight." (e) How great soever their desire may also be, they find that they are unable to do his will, as they wish; "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit; and they cannot do the things that they would," Gal. v. 17. See how that illustrious saint was constrained to complain, Rom. vii. 13—24. This will soon urge them to pray that the will of God may be done by them. Hear how David sighed to the Lord, Psalm cxix. 4, 5. "Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes."

APPLICATION.

Are the children of God obliged to pray thus, the opinion of the Pelagians cannot then be maintained; for they imagine that the sinner is able through his own freewill to do the will of God perfectly of himself; yea, the Papists pretend that they can do more than the will of God by works of supererogation. They talk indeed of a general and sufficient grace; but what do they mean by it, but that God hath given them a freewill, whereby they are able to do his will perfectly. They speak very highly of assisting grace, but they cannot inform us how it influenceth or assists the will inwardly to do the will of God. But why do they pray then that God's will may be done by them? it is certainly unnecessary, they are able of themselves to do it. And therefore we must look upon their praying to be only a mocking of God, and a mere flattering of him with their mouths, and a lying unto him with their tongues.

Purer therefore is the doctrine of the reformed church, which humbles man by teaching him according to the word of God his inability, that he may seek help of the Lord, in order that he may do

his will. Although we had no other proof than this petition, of the inability of the sinner to do good, and that even the children of God are unable in part to perform the will of God perfectly, it would suffice to assure us of the truth of our opinion.

But of what advantage is it to us to know that we are unable to do the will of God, and that we are therefore obliged to pray that he would enable us to do it, if we do not call upon God in spirit and in truth for this purpose. It is indeed certain, that ye who are not yet converted, and are not children of God in Christ, do not offer up this petition in truth. For (a) many are yet so ignorant, that they know not what the will of God is, nor how it is done, nor in what manner they ought to pray that it may be done. Is it not true? If we should ask you, who have not yet been instructed herein from the word of God, concerning these things, would ye be able to give us any account of them? How then can your saying these words be praying? "Ye know not what ye ask," like the sons of Zebedee, Matt. xx. 22. and "ye worship ye know not what," like the Samaritans, John iv. 22. (b) Some of you it is true, "know the will of God, and approve of the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law," like the Pharisees, Rom. ii. 18. But ye have no desire to do the will of God; for ye conduct yourselves so dissolutely, as if ye had nothing to do with it: "God writes to you the great things of his law, but they are counted as a strange thing by you," Hosea viii. 12. Ye will not submit to such a strait bond, and have no mind to it, but only that your will may be done, and ye "do the will of the flesh, and of the mind," Eph. ii. 3. And therefore it is true of you what Paul testifieth of the Judaizing Christians of his time, Titus i. 16, "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate." (c) I know that many of you are not so ungodly, but civil, honest, and even exceedingly devout; but to deny your own wills and to do just the will of God in all things, believing all that God reveals, and doing all that he commands, abstaining from all that he forbids, and enduring patiently all the misery that he inflicts upon you, and that because it is the will of God, and doing all this so exactly and perfectly, as the angels in heaven, to this indeed ye have no mind, and it is not your aim, when ye utter this petition. Yea, ye are exceedingly averse from these things, and will even scoff at those who are set upon strict godliness, and will decry them, as legalists. It is your idea, that since we cannot be perfect in this life, we are therefore not obliged to aim at it, or to pursue it, as if this were a work that belonged to none, but those

who were in heaven. How can ye then say to God in prayer, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," for ye mean not what ye say, but come to God with a lie in your mouths. (d) There are those also who had once a vehement desire to do the will of God in all things, when they were concerned about their sins, and their salvation, or when they were admitted upon their confession to be members of the church; but how soon have they become cool! like that young man, who said, when his father commanded him, "I go, Sir, but went not," Matt. xxi. 30, and like Demas and others, 2 Tim. iv. 10. 2 Peter ii. 20—22. We might say, how was it possible, when they seemed to have such an ardent desire? but their determination was the effect of their inconsideration, they counted not the cost; they were not aware of the strength of their lusts, nor of their own inability. And therefore their fire which they had kindled themselves, was soon quenched, they were found faithless to their promise, and showed that they had never yet prayed from a deep and experimental view of their inability that they might do the will of God.

What do ye, who are thus disposed, think? is not your praying only a mocking of God? or do ye imagine, that he doth not attend to your behaviour? can he be pleased with your conduct? no: for ye set your will above his will, and "walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Eph ii. 2, and ye are "taken captive in the snare of the devil at his will," 2 Tim. ii. 26. Ye pray that the will of God may be done, and what is God's will concerning you? Is it not that he should reveal his wrath from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," according to Rom. i. 18. And he will cause this to be done with respect to you also: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I am against thee, O Zidon, and I will be glorified in the midst of thee: and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall have executed judgments in the midst of her, and shall be sanctified in her," Ezek. xxviii. 22. It is your earnest desire to obtain a place in heaven with the holy angels; but how is this possible, while ye have no desire to do the will of God on earth, as the angels do it in heaven? It behooves you therefore to know that, continuing thus, ye will hear that dreadful and irreversible sentence from the mouth of the great Judge, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," Matt. xxv. 41.

Alas, sinner! behold this with concern and anxiety, that thou mayest awake, and be in earnest, and yet do the will of God, by em-

bracing his Son. and hearkening to him: God cries to thee "from the clouds, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear thou him," Matt. xvii. 5. Be not any longer rebellious, but submit thyself to him, that thou mayest be saved

But children of your Father, who is in heaven, who see with so much sorrow the perversity of your will, and your wicked inclinations and have so great a desire to do the will of your Father, let it be your frequent and hearty prayer, that the will of God may be done by you, and therefore,

1 Know and acknowledge with pleasure his lawgiving power. Unite in heart with the church, when she saith, Isaiah xxxiii. 22, "The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will save us." Is not he the supreme Lord, who hath a right to command that which is holy, just and good? Is not he your Father, to whom it appertaineth to enjoin that which is good on his children? Are not ye subject to him in every respect? Let your souls then be ready to receive the law from his mouth, and "to hear when he speaks," like young Samuel, 1 Sam. iii. 10, and to approve of his will with Paul, who said, Rom. vii. 12, "The law is holy, and the commandment is holy, just and good."

2. Stir up your desire to do his will, and declare it to him. Your Father beholds with pleasure the readiness of your mind: "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted," saith the apostle, 2 Cor. viii. 12. David declared in this manner his desire to do the will of the Lord, Psalm cxix. 35, "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein do I delight." Your Redeemer, whom ye ought to imitate, said to his Father, Psalm xl. 8. "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." We shall not indeed otherwise pray heartily: a strong delight and desire adds strength and wings to prayer, so that it penetrates to the throne of God, yea, even into his affections.

3. Have and retain a deep sense of your inability to do the will of God. Although ye are regenerated and are new creatures, and possess thus new abilities, there remains still, beside orher deficiencies, a great impotency in you. How great soever your strength may be through your eminent increase in the spiritual life, ye will nevertheless while here "know only in part," according to 1 Cor. xiii. 9. Yea, though ye were perfect, and not guilty of any iniquity, ye would still not be gods, but creatures, dependent on God, and able to do his will only through his influence. We must therefore have a lively apprehension of our inability: the Saviour impressed this on his believing apostles, when he said, John xv. 15. "Without

me ye can do nothing." When we have even a great desire to do the will of God, and think that this will preserve us from stumbling, we are then near to our fall. The example of Peter, Matt. xxvi. 33—35. 69—74, ought to keep us humble, and cause us to see, that like David we "are ready to halt" Psalm xxxviii. 17. Such a discovery of our inability, accompanied with a desire to do the will of God, causes the soul to cry for help, and to say with Jehoshaphat 2 Chron. xx. 12, "We have no might against this company that cometh against us: neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee."

4. We are never able, either to do the will of God, or to pray that God would enable us to do it, as long as we cleave to our own will. And therefore the Christian ought to deny his own will, and to renounce it: it is evil to will our own judgment, profit, pleasure and honour; and the will of God alone is good: and therefore the will of God ought to be our will, and our will ought to be lost in God's will, so that we willed nothing but what God willeth, and because he wills it. We have seen before how the Saviour himself, and others denied their own will. Believers, "ye are not your own, but God's, in body and in spirit," 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's," Rom. xiv. 7, 8. The Christian should "die" then to all that is his own, that "his life may be hidden with Christ in God, and that whatsoever he doth, he may do it heartily, as to the Lord," according to the words of Paul, Col. iii. 3, 23.

5. Have ye a desire to do the will of the Lord, endeavour to obtain a knowledge of it in every respect. "Wherefore be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is," Eph. v. 17. In every situation "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God," Rom. xii. 2. Give heed to the word, in which the Lord discovers his will; attend much to your conscience, in which God hath written his law, as David attended to it, Psalm xxvii. 8. Make frequent use of Christ, whose name is "Counsellor," Isaiah ix. 5, and call often on the Lord, "to teach you his way, that ye may walk in his truth," like David, Psalm lxxxvi. 11.

6. Pray much and earnestly, that he would cause you to do his will. See how David, the man after God's heart, who did all the will of God, prayed repeatedly to God for this, Psalm xxv. lxxxvi. cxix. cxliii. Ye also have liberty to do this: Jesus directs you to his Father, he hath even obtained for you, that ye should do the will

of God: he is made of God sanctification to you, 1 Cor. i. 30. It behooves you therefore to pray for it perseveringly at the throne, with a steadfast confidence.

7. Do then your Father's will. He excites you frequently, and strengthens you with might in your soul upon your praying. Attend therefore to his operations, and "run after him, when he draws you." Song i. 4. But aim at a manly holiness; yea, with Paul "follow after perfection," Philip. iii. 12–14. Eye the illustrious examples of the citizens of heaven, yea, endeavour to "be followers of God, as dear children," Eph. v. 1, "to be perfect, as your Father who is in heaven is perfect," Mat. v. 48.

Is it your desire to do and pray thus according to the will of God, assure yourselves then that "ye pray according to his will, and shall be heard," 1 John v. 14. Do afflictions betide you, they are according to the will of God, and "ye may safely commit your souls to him in well doing," and they will not be so grievous to you: they will assuredly one time or other cease; since ye will be established with, and among, and like the angels, that ye may, being without spot or wrinkle, do his will perfectly: "May the Lord fill you with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom, and spiritual understanding; that ye may walk worthily of the Lord to all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." Amen.

THE

FOURTH PETITION

EXPLAINED.

L. LORD'S DAY.

Mat. vi. 11. Give us this day our daily bread.

Q. 125. *Which is the fourth petition?*

A. "Give us this day our daily bread; that is, be pleased to provide us with all things necessary for the body, that we may thereby acknowledge thee to be the only fountain of all good, and that neither our care nor industry, nor even thy gifts can profit us without thy blessing; and therefore that we may withdraw our trust from all creatures, and place it alone in thee.

IT was a reasonable exhortation of the apostle to the believing Corinthians, "Whether ye eat, or whether ye drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," 1 Cor. x. 31. It is certain, that "the Lord hath made all things for himself," as the wisest of kings speaks, Prov. xvi. 4. There is nothing, that doth not in its particular way praise the Lord, all his creatures, yea, even the least, bear witness to his glory: but "he hath formed his people" especially

"that they should show forth his praise," Isaiah xliii. 21. Hear how David speaks, he saith, Psalm cxlv. 10, "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee." Great and inconceivable is the favour which he showeth to those whom he loves; he hath made them his children, his subjects, yea, kings, that they may do only his will, and conduct themselves to his glory: Peter saith to them, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light," 1 Pet. ii. 9. These glorious favours affect their hearts so, that they sometimes, through ignorance, consider it as too ignoble an employment to meditate on inferior things, even benefits which relate to the body. But as the Lord doth all things, and therefore provides them also with their bodily necessaries, for his own sake, it is therefore his will, that they should praise and glorify him also in eating and drinking. If the Lord could sustain Moses, Elijah and Jesus many days without meat and drink, he could also sustain all his children immediately without food; but it doth not please him to do this, but it is his will, that they should depend on him continually, that they may seek of him renewedly that which is necessary for their support, and may have repeatedly new matter for glorifying him in eating and drinking.

This is the reason why the Lord Jesus teacheth the children of God to pray every day for their daily bread, as a mean whereby they may hallow their Father's name. For he prescribes as means to promote the hallowing of the name of the Lord the following petitions, as well those for obtaining that which is good, as those for deprecating evil, to wit, the two last petitions. The petitions, which serve as means to obtain that which is good, relate either to spiritual good, as the coming of God's kingdom, and the doing of God's will, mentioned in the second and third petition; or they relate to temporal good, even our daily bread, mentioned in this fourth petition, that we may partake of it to his honour. Thus the instructor also explains this petition, when he saith, "That we may thereby acknowledge thee to be the only fountain of all good," &c.

Three particulars offer themselves to our consideration here:

I. The subject concerning which we pray, "Our daily bread,"

II. That which we request with respect to it, "That God would give it us this day," and

III. Why we must pray thus.

I. Because the word bread sometimes denotes the spiritual food of the soul, to wit, Christ, who calls himself "the bread of life,"

John vi. 48, as also the word of God, with respect to which God sometimes "sends a famine," Amos viii. 11, therefore the Papists wish to find their massbread here. There were of old certain persons among the orthodox, who would not allow, that men ought to pray for material bread: and there are still famous men,* who think that these words relate not only to material, but also to spiritual bread in the future times of antichrist, when "a measure of wheat should be sold for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny," Prov. vi. 6. But we cannot agree with them in their opinion, but believe that these words speak only of proper bread, because we perceive no reason here for departing from the literal sense of the words. This pattern of prayer would be imperfect, if it did not direct us to pray for material bread, and if it did not teach us to depend on God with respect to the body. It is also too curious and too farsought, to apply this petition in its proper emphasis to the deficiency of the means of grace under the dominion of antichrist: for we have no reason but our own fancy to explain this compendious prayer, as a prophecy. There was undoubtedly as great a defect of the pure administration of the gospel in the times of the heathen persecutions, and of the heresy of Arius and others. It is also certain that Rev. vi. 6, relates not to the power of antichrist, which we must seek under the sounding of the trumpets, and not under the opening of the third seal, which foreshows a scarcity, occasioned by persecutions from without, and errours from within: for the seals exhibit the church under the heathen persecutions, and introduce the trumpets, after a silence of a half an hour under Constantine the Great, according to Rev. viii. 1, 2, and the trumpets declare the appearance of antichrist, and introduce the vials, which plague antichrist. See Rev. xi. 14, 15. xv. 1. 5—8. xvi. 1.

But when proper bread is mentioned here, then "all things which are necessary for the body" are implied under it, to wit, all that a man needeth to preserve life, as meat, drink, clothing, a dwelling, health, rest and peace: and thus also that which preserves men from war, sickness, famine, thieves, &c. Bread therefore denotes here all that a man hath need of for the body: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," saith God to Adam, Gen. iii. 19. Paul calls "that with which we ought to be content, our food and raiment," 1 Tim. vi. 8. And Jacob calls it "being kept in his way,

* By these the author means the Cocceians, who look upon the Lord's prayer as a prophecy, although they explain it also according to the common method, and thus affix a twofold sense to it.

bread to eat, and raiment to put on, and returning again to his father's house in peace," Gen. xxviii. 20, 21. The Saviour had also weighty reasons for calling our bodily necessaries simply bread, since, (a) bread is most necessary for us, (b) is always tasteful, and we never loathe it, when we are in health, (c) it is also used with all kinds of food, and renders it palatable and nourishing. (d) We could always subsist upon bread alone better than upon any other kind of food, and (e) he would teach us thus that we ought not to be too much set upon pleasing our appetites, or hanker too much after delicious food, and sensual gratifications, nor after an abundance: "Give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me," saith Agur, Prov. xxx. 8.

It is worthy of observation, that he calls this "Our bread." The Lord God adopts believers for members of his household, and partakers of his table: for "they are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God," Eph. ii. 19. They go therefore every day to their Father, that he may give them bread, which they may, according to the liberty, which the Son of God giveth them, call their own bread, as well because they have need of it, as that is called a person's bread, of which he hath need: "His bread shall be given him, and his waters shall be sure," Isaiah xxxiii. 16, as also because it is dispensed to them by their Father, as their appointed portion: "Feed me with the bread of my appointed portion,"* saith Agur, Prov. xxx. 8. And the children of God say "our bread," particularly on account of a certain and lawful right, which they have to their necessary food, as their own property. We have a lawful right to our bread before men, when we obtain it by lawful means, by inheritance, by a gift, or by any honest calling, as trafficking, trade, handicrafts, or other labour: when "we work quietly, we then eat our own bread," saith Paul, 2 Thess. iii. 12. But if we will call it our bread with respect to the Lord, we must then have a right to it before the divine tribunal also. Before the fall man had a right to all things, having been appointed lord of all things by God, according to Gen. i. 28, 29, but having apostatized from God, he forfeited all things, and "the ground was cursed" on account of his sin, Gen. iii. 17. Yea, "his basket and his store are cursed," Deut. xxviii. 17. But the Son of God having satisfied for the sins of the elect, hath obtained a right and property in all the divine benefits for them again, and on account of this righteousness of his, they call their necessaries

* This is agreeable to the Dutch translation.

their bread: "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours; for ye are Christ's:" thus speaks Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 21—23. And thus they ask for their own bread, of which they have need, which the Father had appointed for them, and to which they have a lawful right before God and men. And since they know that every believer hath the same right to his Father's table, and since they love one another heartily, as children of the same family, therefore each one saith not my bread: but uniting his soul in prayer with all the children of God, he saith, "our bread," and he will also request of his Father so much for himself, that he may have whereof he may impart something to his fellowchildren, when they have need, as their bread.

As the Greek word *epiousios*, translated "daily," occurs in no other passage of the New Testament, but only in this fourth petition, it hath occasioned some difficulty to expositors to know what they ought to understand by it. One understands this by it, and another that: but we approve most of those who render it "superessential," that of which we have need over and above our bodily being, as a sufficiency to support it: because the words, of which this is compounded, to wit, *epi*, over, above, and *ousia*, essence, or being, lead us to this sense: and because the Greek fathers, who understood their own language best, took it thus. And therefore our daily bread signifieth those things which are necessary for the body, or which we need over and above our body, in order to sustain it: "God giveth us, besides life and breath, likewise all things." Acts xvii. 25. Thus James also, having spoken first, though with other Greek words, of daily food, calls this afterwards "those things which are needful for the body," James ii. 15, 16. So it is also said of the food of Jehoiakim, 2 Kings xxv. 30, "His allowance was a continual allowance, given him of the king, a daily rate for every day."

II With respect to this daily bread we pray "that God would give it us this day." That is, as the instructor explains it, that God would "provide" us with all things necessary for the body. He doth this, (a) When he causes bread to grow in the fields for us, giving us fruitful years and harvests,: "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart." Thus David speaks through the Spirit, Psalm civ. 14, 15, God commands his blessing, so that "the land yields her fruits, and we eat to the full," Lev. xxv. 19. "He

hears the heavens, and the heavens hear the earth, and the earth hears the corn, and wine, and oil, and they hear Jezreel," Hosea ii. 21, 22. When God is angry with his people, and will not give them their bread, he then "makes their heaven as iron, and their earth as brass," Lev. xxvi. 19. (b) God gives us bread, when he permits us to gather it into our barns in its season, with success, and with his blessing, and when he brings it into our houses, and to our tables. Hear David say this also, Psalm civ. 21—28. cxlv 15, 16. "These all wait upon thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That which thou givest them they gather: thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good." Of what advantage is it to us, that there is food in the field, while it is not brought to us? God can destroy it even then by sending too plenteous a rain, which "he causes to come sometimes in harvest for a correction," as Elihu speaks, Job xxxvii. 13. See 1 Sam. xii. 17, 18. Prov. xxvi. 1, or by insects, "the locust, the cankerworm, the caterpillar and the palmerworm, which eat up all things," Joel ii. 25, or by "the enemies, who eat up our grain in the fields, so that we sow our seed in vain," Lev. xxvi. 16 (c) God gives bread also when he blesses our plans and the labour of our hands, so that we obtain sufficient profit and store, and are thus able to provide ourselves with whatsoever is necessary for us, without anxiety; for when God doth not bless us thus, "it is in vain for us to rise up early, to sit up late, and to eat the bread of sorrows; for so he giveth his beloved sleep," Psalm cxxviii. 2. (d) Also when the Lord grants us power to make use of it willingly and cheerfully, in proportion to the measure of his blessings: "It is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun, all the days of his life, which God giveth him; for it is his portion. Every man also, to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof; and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God," as the preacher saith, Eccl. v. 18, 19. And see how God punisheth the covetous man, when he doth not give him power to use the gifts of God willingly and cheerfully, though temperately withal, Eccl. vi. 1, 2. (e) It is not less a gift of God, when he affords us health, so that we can partake of his gifts with pleasure, and relish them; for when "God chastens a man with pain on his bed, his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat," Job xxxiii. 19, 28. Psalm vii. 18. (f) God gives bread particularly, when he affords by his influence a profitable and nourishing virtue to the bread, of which we partake; "for man doth not live

by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord," Deut. viii. 3. Matt. iv. 4. When God breaks the staff of bread, it doth then neither profit nor nourish, See Lev. xxvi. 26. Hag. i. 6.

But God's giving bread denotes not only, that he provides man with it, but also that he gives it to his children in his kindness, from a fatherly heart: God gives unconverted persons also bread; for "he causeth his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and he sendeth his rain on the just and on the unjust," as Jesus speaks, Mat. v. 45. But he doth not do this from his special kindness and love in Christ, as a Father: he gives it to them as beggars, from his common goodness: but he doth not take them into his house, as his children and heirs. He gives believers bread, because they are his children, his heirs, and entitled to all his goodness; yea, he gives himself and his Son to them in the bread: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" as Paul speaks, Rom. viii. 32.

Although the children of God have such a special right to their bread, they have it not nevertheless on account of their own worthiness and merits. It is only free favour and grace: they had forfeited it; the Son of God purchased it for them: they must obtain it by prayer of the Father. They ought therefore to beware of demanding it of their Father with insolence, like petulant children; but they must pray for it with humility and selfabasement, like the prodigal son, Luke xv. 18, 19.

But why do they pray for bread? and why doth the Father give it them, upon their petition? the catechism saith, (a) "That we may thereby acknowledge thee to be the only fountain of all good." They must come to him with this impression, that they may encourage themselves, when they pray, with the consideration, "that he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that they ask or think," Eph. iii. 20. They go to him, as their Father, who is in heaven, as in his storehouse, acknowledging thus that "every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights," James i. 7. And when God giveth them bread upon their praying, they acknowledge then from experience, that he is the only fountain of all good, as Jacob promised that he would do, when God should give him bread, Gen. xxviii. 20—22. (b) "And that neither our care, nor industry, nor even his gifts can profit us without his blessing." He who prays in truth believes this, for he would otherwise look no further than his own care,

and labour, and the gifts of God, which he enjoys already: but now he lifts his soul up to the Father, that he may obtain his blessing; and when his Father bestows his blessing, he then acknowledges in his heart, "that it is the Lord his God, who giveth him power to get wealth," Deut. viii. 18. From which it followeth, that they "withdraw their trust from all creatures, and place it in him alone;" for they frequently see that those things on which they depend, as their own care, industry, yea, even the gifts of God, in which they often used to trust and with which they frequently encouraged themselves, do all fail and forsake them. This causes them to look unto and trust only in the Lord, the everlasting rock, especially when they have frequently discovered, that he provides them with temporal necessaries, without their own care, and beyond their own expectation. David, having by the help of the Lord, "slain the lion and the bear," trusted that he would also "in the name of the Lord, slay the giant," 1 Sam. xvii. 36, 37, 45, 46.

In order that they may acknowledge this, they pray that the Father would give "them" bread. Give "us" say they. The Lord sometimes gives it to their enemies, either their private, or public enemies, when his anger is kindled against them, on account of their sins; but they pray that he would not do this, according to his promises, which he hath made to them, Isaiah lxv. 22. "They shall not build, and another inhabit: they shall not plant, and another eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." And they pray thus, not only each for himself, but also for one another, as children of one family, who do not nourish any envy or illwill toward each other. As soon as they see any one of the Lord's household in want, if they cannot themselves communicate to the necessities of the saints, they will have compassion on him and will pray to the Father for him, that he may provide for him also. "They pray for all the saints," Eph. vi. 18, for "they have been taught of God to love one another," 1 Thess. iv. 9. And therefore "they look, not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others," as Paul teacheth, Philip. ii. 4.

But when do we wish God to give us bread? according to the prescript of the Saviour we must pray that God would give it us "this day," that is "each day,"* as it is explained, Luke xi. 3. And so our great Advocate chooses that we (a) should depend upon the Father, and go to him for our bread every day. (b) He teaches

* According to the Dutch translation.

us that we are so necessitous, that we need bread day by day. The bread of yesterday cannot profit us to day, it must be renewed, and given again and again. (c) He forbids us to ask for much bread, or bread for a long time, and (d) he chooses that we should not have any anxious or cumbering concern for the morrow, but live day by day from our Father's hands Therefore he saith, Mat. vi. 34. "Take no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself: sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

III. As the Lord Jesus doth not enjoin aught upon the children of God to no purpose, therefore he had also certain reasons for enjoining on them to pray for their daily bread; for (1) they have need of it: God hath created them with such needy bodies, that they cannot subsist without daily food. (2) He chooses that they should hallow his Father's name, promote his kingdom, and do his will. How shall they do this, while they have neither food nor raiment? will they not, when they are poor, be seduced to "steal and take the name of their God in vain?" Therefore Agur prayed to be preserved from poverty, Prov. xxx. 8, 9. (3) We cannot provide ourselves with bread, no creature can furnish us with it: all our own care and industry, and that of others; yea, and the gifts of the Lord are to no purpose without his blessing. Whither shall we then go? must we not pray to the Father for bread? (4) We have wasted and forfeited all that we had: how shall we obtain it again, but by praying to the Father? (5) God is the Father of his children; doth it not now become children to seek their bread of their Father? (6) He gives bread upon our praying: "he provides even the raven with food, when his young ones cry to God, and wander for lack of meat," Job xxxviii. 41. God hearkened to young Ishmael, and showed his mother a well, that she might give him drink, Gen. xxi. 15—19. Will he not then attend to the prayer of his children, and provide them with daily bread? and shall not this induce them to call on him for bread? (7) Though a man should have exceedingly many goods, and be free from all care, how shall his food be blessed to him, except by prayer; for "it is sanctified by prayer," as Paul teacheth, 1 Tim. iv. 5.

APPLICATION.

Ought men, yea, ought even the children of God to pray for their daily bread, how senseless then are the Papists, who think that they will merit heaven by their works, which they call good, but which are only superstitious! We cannot merit so much as a morsel of bread of God, but must pray for it day by day, yea, beg, as it were, at the door of heaven; how then shall we merit that eternal weight of glory?

But, hearers, how few are there of you, who, like true children of God, pray for their daily bread! It is true, ye utter these words every day; but when your behaviour is rightly considered, it will appear that the most of you do not pray aright for that which they need. For (a) of whom do ye seek your bread? of him, who is the only fountain of all good? do ye depend in all things on him, living only from his hand, and not from your own industry and care, and his gifts, which ye possess? Surely many do not act thus; for the most look to their own store, and to nothing besides; if they have nothing, they attend then to their own contrivance, health, wisdom and strength, and think that their own hands are sufficient for them, to provide them with bread: and when they obtain aught by these means, they thank themselves, and say in their hearts, "My power, and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth," Deut. viii. 17. And they do thus, like the king of Babylon, Hab. i. 16, "sacrifice to their net, and burn incense to their drag: because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous." (b) Perhaps ye say, We know that we must seek our bread of God alone, and not from our own industry, and anxious care, and therefore we are easy. But how are ye easy? is not your easiness only carelessness and slothfulness? is it not a depending upon the labour, or kindness and gifts of others, eating the bread of idleness, and neglecting every proper opportunity to eat your own bread? for ye do not thus eat your own bread, but that of others. He who prays, and doth not work as he ought for bread, his prayer displeaseth the Lord, and he eats that which is not his own: "If any man will not work, neither ought he to eat. For we hear that there are some among you which walk disorderly, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such, we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work,

and eat their own bread," according to 2 Thess. iii. 10—12. (e) Some among you are exceedingly industrious, yea, root like moles in the earth with their whole heart. But for what purpose? not that they may have daily bread, but that they may obtain an abundance, more than is sufficient for them. They are not satisfied with daily bread, but they endeavour by scraping and scrambling, by fair and unfair means, to heap up much: "They covet with an evil covetousness, that they may set their nest on high, and may be delivered from the power of evil," Hab. ii. 9, or that they may eat and drink luxuriously: and when it happens, that the food, which is prepared for those dainty persons, is not tasteful enough, they become wonderfully peevish, and even intolerable to those who prepare their meat and drink for them: It is still more unsuitable, that some dare not make a moderate use of the gifts of God, but endeavour to hoard all up, that they may be rich, which they will call frugality and thriftiness, when it is indeed a vile niggardliness, "vanity and an evil disease," as Solomon speaks, Eccl. vi. 2. (d) Many will disapprove of this, yea, detest it; but do ye not decline to another extreme? I mean you, who, when God gives you his gifts, employ them against him by being proud of them, by squandering them in making a parade with your furniture and clothing, by eating and drinking to excess, and by taking your pleasure. Men employ thus the blessings of God as weapons to fight against him, and provoke him to anger, like "Jesburun, who when he was waxen fat, kicked, and forsook God who made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation," Deut. xxxii. 15, and like "Israel, who, when they were increased, sinned still more against the Lord," Hosea iv. 7. (e) But those are not less worthy to be reproved, who do indeed provide bread for themselves, but have nothing for their neighbour. Every man think they, for himself and God for us all, as if man were created only for himself, and not for his neighbour, and as if he might hide himself from his own flesh. Doth God give your neighbour bread, ye will presently repine at it, and 'your eye will be evil because God is good," Mat. xx. 15. But how do ye then pray, "Give us this day our daily bread?" Ye do not mean it, your mouth saith it, but your heart and actions do not agree with your mouth.

Know then, friends, ye who are thus disposed, that the bread which ye have, and of which ye partake, is not yours. Perhaps ye have a lawful right to it before men, but ye have not before the Lord since ye evidence that he is not your father in Christ: and therefore ye possess and partake of it unjustly like robbers: "God

will also curse your blessings, yea, he hath cursed them already," Mal. ii. 2. I beseech you, read what is said, Deut. xxviii. 16—20. Perhaps ye laugh at the time to come, because ye have a great store for a long time: but know that if ye remain as ye are, ye may yet suffer want: "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings, they fly away as an eagle toward heaven," Prov xxiii. 5. If your store be not taken away from you, ye will be snatched away from it, like the rich fool, Luke xii. 20. What comfort will there then be for your soul? surely not even a drop of water. See this in that rich man, Luke xvi. 24.

Be then concerned for your souls that they may become hungry, and may seek to have God for their father, that he may "fill them," according to his promise, Mat. v. 6. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and other things shall be added to you," Mat. vi. 33.

With respect to you, true believers, who have God for your father and faithful provider:

Behold his wisdom and goodness, that he hath created, and that he continues all his creatures, and you also so dependent and needy, that ye must be provided by him with bread repeatedly. It is better, that ye must be sustained by his gifts, than that he should support you immediately without them: for ye not only obtain thus continually a new refreshment by a variety of gifts, but ye have also by your continual renewed neediness an inducement to apply unto, and to praise his allsufficiency, power, and goodness, and to "trust in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy," as the apostle speaks, 1 Tim. vi. 17.

2. Therefore depend also continually in an active manner on him, seeking to obtain of him all that ye need, and living not from your care and industry, but only from him, and from his hand, as a child lives from his father's hand: "He giveth to all life, breath and all things. And in him we live, move, and have our being," as Paul saith to the Gentiles at Athens, Acts xvii. 25, 28. But is it enough to depend on him, and to be provided by him in this passive manner? ought not the children of God to depend on him for all things also in an active and operative manner? certainly they ought. Therefore when ye have need of any thing, let not your souls look too much to your care, nor to your labour, nor to the gifts of the Lord, and suffer not yourselves, when ye are in want, to be disquieted with anxious solicitude; but look up continually to him with sighing and praying, that he may give it you, having an undisturbed trust,

and a holy, childlike security, that he will provide you sufficiently in his time, and in his way. Ye come surely for your own bread, which your Father hath allotted you: "Therefore take no thought for your life what ye shall eat, nor what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. He who hath given you life and a body will also provide for them. He provides even for the fowls, and for the grass of the field: will not your Father then, who knoweth what ye need, provide what is needful for you?" See Mat. vi. 25–34. "He who hath given you" the greater, yea even "his own Son," will he deny you the less, "and not freely give you all things with him?" Rom. viii. 32. "Cast then all your care upon him, for he careth for you," 1 Peter v. 7.

3. Make use nevertheless of the means, which he hath appointed and commanded you to use, in order to sustain you by them, to wit, a suitable carefulness, diligent labour, and a judicious contrivance, and do not neglect his gifts by your carelessness. No godly person ought to afford an occasion of reproaching sincere Christians with slothfulness and negligence. No man ought to be more diligent in an honest calling than a Christian: not that he may live by it, for he must live from his Father's hand; but because it is his Father's will to sustain him by his diligence, and he is therefore bound to work in obedience to his Father: "Them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread," saith Paul, 2 Thess. iii. 12.

4. Be content with your daily bread. To crave with vehement desires an abundance is unbecoming and unprofitable: ye will indeed have no more than your Father hath allotted you: We must with Paul "learn in whatsoever state we are, therewith to be content," Philip. iv. 11. He saith, Heb. xiii. 5. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." As we should pray against "poverty," so we may indeed pray also against "riches," and desire of God only "the bread that is convenient for us," with Agur Prov xxx. 8. Ye have liberty to seek only your daily bread of your Father, and not an abundance: "Having food and raiment, let us therewith be content," according to 1 Tim. vi. 8. Let the men of this world, who have their portion in this life, pant after much; but do not ye, who have obtained a better and more noble portion of your Father, and who expect still more.

5. When your Father gives you bread, endeavour to pause a while, and observe by what ways and means he hath furnished you

with it; whence it hath come to you; who hath laboured at it; how it hath been brought to you; how the little that ye obtain sufficeth you; and all frequently without any exertion of your own How many wonderful ways of God's good hand toward you would ye not see in this, and admire and rejoice in it, saying with Hagar, Gen. xvi. 13. "Have I here also looked after him that seeth me?"

6. Make also a good use of your daily bread, when your Father gives it you, tasting his fatherly kindness and his sweet love in it. Ye should also "taste and see" in it "that the Lord is good," Psalm xxxiv. 8. Ye ought also to praise him on account of it, and to acknowledge with your heart, and mouth, and actions, that he is the only fountain of all good, that it may be to him, as it is of and through him: "When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God," saith Moses, Deut. viii. 10. Be also charitable to them, who are in want, especially when the Lord blesseth you more than others. See how this is enjoined on you, Prov. iii. 9, 10. Eccl. xi. 42. Isaiah lviii. 7. Gal. vi. 10. Heb. xiii. 16. Ye pray that not only yourselves, but others also may have their daily bread, and the Father will honour you, by making you his hand to give others their daily bread.

Do the wicked boast of their abundance and have ye but little? Well, "a little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked," as David speaks with truth. Psalm xxxvii. 16. He hath it from his Father in his love with his Son. When the wicked shall be stripped of all that he hath at present, and shall be reduced to the greatest want, then "shall ye not hunger any more, nor thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on you, nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed you, and shall lead you unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes." Amen.

THE

FIFTH PETITION

EXPLAINED.

LI. LORD'S DAY.

Matt. vi. 12. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Q. 126. *Which is the fifth petition?*

A. "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; that is, be pleased for the sake of Christ's blood, not to impute to us poor sinners, our transgressions, nor that depravity which always cleaves to us; even as we feel this evidence of thy grace in us, that it is our firm resolution from the heart, to forgive our neighbour.

"CURSED is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee," saith the Lord to Adam, because he had sinned against him, Gen. iii. 17, 18. This curse continues even until the present day, to the sorrow of his posterity, since they have inherited their father's sin: yea, it is also increased by unfruitful seasons. God sometimes denies rain, at other times he sends too great an

abundance of it; he makes the heaven like iron, and the earth like brass; he sends mildew and blasting; he commands his great army, the locust, the cankerworm, the caterpillar and the palmerworm to eat up all things, and when he even seems to bless the fruits of the earth, he then still sends sometimes the enemies, who rob and take all away. Doth he permit the owner to gather it, he breaks the staff of his bread, so that although he eat, he is not satisfied. And what is the cause of all this, but his sins? Cain was cursed on account of his sins, and not only himself, but also his ground: "When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength," saith the Lord, Gen. iv. 11, 12. Yea, he threatens his priests on account of their sins, "that he would send a curse on them, and curse their blessings: yea, he had cursed them already, because they did not lay the commandment to heart," Mal. ii. 1, 2, 3. We might say, he will spare his children: for their transgression is pardoned, their iniquity is forgiven; but they return still too often to folly, and therefore the Lord will also chastise them often with scarceness. On this account Abraham was obliged to go to Egypt, Gen. xii. 10. Isaac to Gerar, Gen. xxvi. 1, and Jacob to send with anxiety his sons to Egypt, Gen. xlii. and xliii. How often were the Israelites visited with famine! and the children of God are still frequently forced to complain, that their bread is not blessed to them. What shall they do? it will be said, they must pray to their Father: but their sins are bars to them, and "they hide his face from them, so that he doth not hear," Isaiah lix. 2. Their iniquities must be taken away. But how? shall it be done only by conversion? no; for that doth not take away the guilt of sins. They must therefore first endeavour to seek the forgiveness of their sins of their Father: "When the Lord God had formed grasshoppers, and they would have wholly eaten up the grass of the land, Amos said, O Lord, forgive, I beseech thee; by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small," Amos vii. 1, 2.

The Lord Jesus teacheth us this in the petition before us. He had taught his children to pray for their daily bread, in the fourth petition: but how could their Father give them their bread, while their sins remained upon them? The Saviour willing to provide against this, teaches them to pray for the forgiveness of their sins, in the fifth petition, as a mean of hallowing their Father's name. We have shown before, that they were obliged to pray in the first petition, that the name of God might be hallowed, and that the following petitions serve as means to obtain that end: which means are either prayers for that which is good, to wit, spiritual good, in

the second and third petition, and bodily, in the fourth petition; or prayers against evil, to wit, that which is past in the fifth petition, and that which is to come, in the sixth petition.

We must now learn to pray for the forgiveness of our debts, which is first proposed in these words,

I. "Forgive us our debts;" and then further paraphrased for explanation.

II. "As we forgive our debtors."

I. By our "debts" we must understand here our "sins," committed against God, as appears from Luke xi. 4, for in that passage these debts are called sins. Thus also the instructor explains our debts by "all our transgressions, and that depravity, which always cleaves to us." The reason is, (a) because they leave us debtors to fulfil our duty: "It is our duty to do that which is commanded us," as the Saviour saith, Luke xvii. 10. Therefore when we sin, we remain debtors to do all that. (b) Sins render us guilty of dishonouring God by breaking and violating his law, and therefore subject us to debt in this respect. Sinners are debtors thus, as Jesus speaks of the suffering Galileans, and the citizens of Jerusalem, who were punished, Luke xviii. 1—4. Sins are also debts that deserve punishment, inasmuch as they oblige us to undergo the punishment, appointed by the justice of God, for the recompence of sins: "The judgment was by one offence to condemnation," saith Paul, Rom. vi. 16.

These debts are not one, or a few but many. We have original and actual debts, debts of thought, word and deed, against the first and second table of the law. Yea, "who can understand our errours?" Psalm xix. 12. Whoever will examine himself in the light of God by his law, will find himself covered with the debts of his sins, and must cry out with truth, "Our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens," Ezra ix. 16.

We acknowledge this not only in general, but we say with respect to ourselves "our" debts. By which (a) each individual acknowledges with regard to himself, that he himself and not another hath acted abominably, and sinned against the Lord. The sinner, while he is not yet affected with a sense of his sins, will like Adam, lay the blame of his sins upon another, and "cover his transgressions, by hiding his iniquities in his bosom," as Job speaks, Job xxxi. 33. But the children of God will see and confess with shame, that they themselves are guilty: "I acknowledge *my* transgressions, and *my*," and not Bathsheba's, "sins, are ever before me," said

the man after God's heart," Psalm li. 3. And hear him say on another occasion, 2 Sam. xxiv. 17, "Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house." (b) When we say our debts, we then also acknowledge, that we have rendered ourselves guilty of the sins of others; by which we do therefore confess, that we have been authors, abettors and imitators of the sins of others, and that we are therefore the more abominable. (c) We also declare that we ourselves are bound to satisfy the justice of God by suffering the righteous punishment of sin, and we do thus condemn ourselves with the church, who pronounced a wo upon herself, Lam. v. 16. "The crown is fallen from our head; wo unto us that we have sinned" (d) And since the children of God appear before him every day with this petition, therefore they confess, as the instructor saith, their depravity which always cleaves to them, and declare that their hearts are evil and abominable through their inbred corruption, as David, when he confesseth his sins, mentions his inherent corruption, saying, Psalm li. 5, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."

The children of God, contemplating their debts in this manner, are greatly distressed on account of them. But whither shall they go? shall they hide themselves with Adam, cry out with Cain, My transgression is too great to be forgiven;* or with Judas, flee to the halter? no, they are too desirous to be saved, and to obtain forgiveness. Shall they then hurry to a priest, confess their sins to him, and seek forgiveness of him? No, they know that vain is the help of man: this would avail them as little, as it did Judas, that he went to the chief priests. They know, as well as the Pharisees, that "none can forgive sins, but God alone," Mark ii. 7. Like David they know that "they have sinned against God only," Psalm li. 4. And therefore they seek forgiveness of him only, who is their Father.

But do they wish that the Father should forgive their debts, and not those of others? no: but they desire that he would forgive the debts of others also, with whom they unite themselves, and whom they bring with themselves to the Father, that he may show kindness to them also. They know by experience how bitter their sins are to them; they regard from brotherly affection the distress of others as their own, and therefore they beseech their Father that he

* This is agreeable to the Dutch translation.

would forgive their debts also, as Moses prayed thus for Israel; Exod. xxxii. 32. Numb. xiv. 19,

The Greek word *aphes*, "forgive," which we find here, and from which the word *aphesis*, "forgiveness," is derived, is supposed by some* to denote the complete forgiveness of sins under the New Testament, since the death of Christ, in opposition to *paresis*, which word they think, intimates a less, an imperfect forgiveness, and a passing of sins by, with an upbraiding of the sinner on account of them. But this opinion is without any foundation; inasmuch as believers prayed even before the death of Christ for forgiveness, with the word *aphesis*, and therefore also obtained it; for the Saviour forgave believers thus even in the days of his flesh, as we see, Matt. ix. 2. Luke vii 47, 48.

We observe briefly concerning the forgiveness of sins, for which believers pray here, that it consists in "a not imputing of sins to them for the sake of Christ's blood," as the instructor speaks, whereby God dischargeth and acquits his believing debtors of their guilt, and gives them a right to life; and so forgiveness of sins is the same with justification: "Even as David describeth the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered: blessed is the man to whom the Lord doth not impute sin," Rom iv. 6—8, from Psalm xxxii. 1, 2. But as we have treated largely enough on justification, upon the twenty-third and twenty fourth Lord's days, we deem it unnecessary to repeat here what we have said there.

But since justification takes place only once, and is perfect, as we have taught on the twenty-third Lord's day, therefore it appears strange, that the Lord Jesus requires that believers, who have God for their Father, and are already justified, should notwithstanding pray daily for the forgiveness of their sins. The Antinomians also say that believers of the New Testament ought not to pray that their sins may be forgiven, because Christ hath now satisfied, and that their sins being once forgiven, they have no more sins, and therefore they need not mourn for their sins any longer, nor pray that they may be forgiven. With respect to Christ's command, that they must still pray, "Father, forgive us our debts," they think that they can evade that, by saying that this petition speaks only of

*By these the author intends the Cocceians, who represent the condition of the believers under the Old Testament as more servile, gloomy and disconsolate, than Christians in general have considered it.

the application, that is, of the assurance, that their sins are forgiven: but according to them, he is no believer, who hath no assurance, and he would therefore pray absurdly for that which he hath already.

The difficulty therefore still remains, how the daily praying of believers can consist with the perfect forgiveness of sins. To say that they deprecate only the temporal punishment of sins, when they entreat that their sins may be forgiven them, cannot wholly remove the difficulty. We rather say that believers pray in the full sense of the words, according to the explanation of the instructor, "that God would for the sake of Christ's blood, not impute to them their transgressions, and the depravity which always cleaves to them." For when God justifieth them perfectly at the first, he doth then indeed forgive their past and present sins, but not their future sins, except so far, that he engages that he will not punish them in future, but will forgive them upon their humiliation, and continued exercise of faith, as we have shown on the twenty-third Lord's day. For sins cannot properly be forgiven, before they are committed: we find also that God forgives the sins of his children every day. See this not only in this petition, but also Numb. xiv. 19, 20. Rev. xxii. 11. And he forgives them particularly upon their daily humiliation as David shows by his example, Psalm xxxii. 3—5. In order to understand this matter rightly, we must observe, (a) that justification in the true sense of the word is either that of the ungodly, whereby God justifieth the elect sinner upon his first act of faith, of which Paul saith, Rom. iv. 5, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." And in this manner was the publican justified, Luke xviii. 13, 14. Or justification is that of the righteous, by which he receives continually a new forgiveness of his daily sins upon his renewed exercise of faith. David often sought this justification in the xxxii. li. cxxx. and cxliii. Psalms. (b) Faith is also to justification, which faith an elect sinner exerciseth first of all, when he begins to seek and to embrace Christ, that he may be justified by God through him; or faith is from justification, by which the believer, who is justified, and who hath thus a right to life, to all the benefits of the covenant of grace, and to all the merits of Christ, exercises faith continually upon God in Christ, that he may actually obtain all that to which he hath a right, and thus also the continual forgiveness of his sins. See with respect to this what hath been said on the seventh Lord's day. (c) But in order to remove the difficulty entirely, we observe that God justifieth the ungodly as a

judge upon a faith, which is to justification: but he justifies the righteous as a father, upon a faith, which is from justification, as David remarks, saying, Psalm ciii. 12, 13, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." See this also, Isaiah lxiv 8, 9. And believers also say here in this sense, and therefore properly, "Father, forgive us our debts." By which they do therefore pray that God would not punish them, on account of their daily wickedness, that he would grant them to enjoy anew the benefits of the covenant of grace, that he would assure their souls of his favour, and cause his face, which is turned away from them, to shine on them again. See how David prays for all this, Psalm li. Which doth not therefore by any means militate against the perfection of their first justification.

Jesus requires that they should pray, that their debts may be forgiven. (a) because he knows how intolerable their debts are to them. Hear how David complains, Psalm xxxviii. 3, 4, "There is no rest in my bones, because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over my head: as a heavy burthen they are become too heavy for me." (d) Nothing is dearer and sweeter to them than the forgiveness of their sins. "David pronounces the man blessed, whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered," Psalm xxxii. 1, 2. (c) "Their Father only can forgive sins." Even the Pharisees knew this, Mark ii. 7: Yea, he will forgive them; for with him there is forgiveness. (d) They must pray for bread: but the Father cannot give them bread with a blessing, as long as their sins are not forgiven. This hath been shown before. (e) They pray that they may do the will of God: but in order to this, they must have forgiveness: for we cannot serve God, with a guilty conscience, "we must do it without fear," Luke i. 74. And he grants forgiveness for this end: "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared," saith David, Psalm cxxx. 4. (f) Forgiveness promotes the kingdom of God, and they must pray that his kingdom may come; for "the kingdom of God is also righteousness, peace, and joy through the Holy Ghost." Rom. xiv. 17. (g) The Father's name is also hallowed by the forgiveness of sins, and all the petitions must serve this end. See Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Isaiah v. 16. Micha vii. 18.

II. The Lord Jesus requires that they should paraphase this petition in order to explain it, with the words, "as we forgive our debtors." Those who are indebted to us in money, are not our debtors in the sense of the text: for to forgive debts of money

without necessity would be prodigality; but by our debtors are meant here those who injure us by words or actions in our body, honour or goods. One man is, according to the second table of the law, obliged to love, honour, help, and be faithful to another. When therefore we do not show these things to our neighbour, but injure him, then we become debtors to him, to retrieve his health, honour and goods, and we deserve his vengeance, on account of the injuries, which we do to him.

To forgive such a debtor is not to revenge the wrong that he hath done to us, and to be kind to him, as our brother, as far as we are able, and to put away from us all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour and evilspeaking, with all malice; and to be kind, and tenderhearted to him, and thus to forgive him, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven his children," Eph. iv. 31, 32. It is true, a Christian may seek compensation for the damage that he hath sustained, with regard to his health, honour and property: but only when his person, honour and prosperity are in danger. It is also unlawful for him to seek his right with malicious bitterness, and a desire of revenge, that he may afflict his debtor: he may do it only to maintain the justice of his cause. And if we can deliver ourselves without exposing our neighbour to shame, loss or pain, we ought to do it, and be goodwilled and kind to our neighbour, that we may convince him of his evil doings with meekness, and "heap coals of fire on his head," according to the injunction of the Saviour and his apostle, Matt. v. 44—48. Rom. xii. 18—21.

The Saviour teacheth us to do and say this, in order to explain our petition, that we may importune the Father to forgive our debts, when he connects our petition with our doing by the words, "as we." We do not assert with these words, that the Father forgives in the selfsame manner in which we forgive; for God forgives as a judge and father, but we as private persons, who are obliged to one another as neighbours: God forgives on account of the satisfaction of his justice by his Son, but we without a satisfaction: when God forgives, he delivers us from eternal punishment, but we do not deliver our neighbour from the judgment of God: although we forgive our neighbour, God still retains his right with respect to them who injure us. Neither do we use these words, "as we forgive our debtors," to denote the meritorious cause, for which we wish that God would forgive our debts; for it doth not become a person, who prays for the forgiveness of his debts, to speak of his merits: he declares that he is wholly guilty, that he deserves hell and damnation. But we must consider this appendix, as "the evidence of God's grace,

which believers feel in themselves, that it is their firm resolution from the heart to forgive their neighbour." Men are by nature prone to revenge, "hateful and hating one another," Titus iii. 3. But the Lord changes the hearts of his elect, according to his law, "which he writes in their hearts," Jer. xxxi. 33, and thus they become inclined to love their neighbour as themselves, and to forgive him his injurious deeds. God enables them to see and feel this in themselves by his Spirit, who causes them to "know the things that are freely given them of God," as Paul speaks, 1 Cor. ii. 12, which is also an evidence of God's grace to them; for "we know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren," 1 John iii. 14. And so this evidence serves, (1) for a declaration, that they have a proper disposition for prayer, and particularly for praying that their debts may be forgiven, to which God hath respect, and upon which he promiseth forgiveness. The Lord Christ saith also, Mark xi 25. "When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your tresspasses." (2) "The children of God show also in some measure by the words, after what manner they desire that God would forgive their debts, to wit, that he would forgive them all, heartily, and for ever. even as they forgive their debtors. So David said to Saul, to whom he had rendered good for evil, 1 Sam. xxvi. 24. "As thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the Lord, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation." (3) This appendix serves also for a token and evidence to them, that God will hear them, and forgive their debts. So Jesus himself explains it, when he saith, vs. 14. "If ye forgive men their trespasses. your heavenly Father will also forgive you." (4) It serves finally as an argument, to urge the Father strongly, that he would forgive us our debts; it is as though we said, are we, who are evil, through thy grace so well inclined to our neighbour, that we forgive him his faults, and wilt not thou then, who art goodness itself, much more forgive us our debts? Therefore Luke explains the word "as" by "for," when he writes, "Forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us," Luke xi. 4.

APPLICATION.

We might from this petition refute the patrons of the perfection of the saints; but I will not busy myself with them, but with you, my worthy hearers, that I may improve this petition to your advantage. Ye see how the children of God pray for the forgiveness of their debts; do ye pray so also? Surely ye do not, (a) who take still so great a delight in the practice of sinning: sin is, as it were, your life, your element; ye live in it, as a fish in the water: "ye have pleasure in unrighteousness," 2 Thess. ii. 12. "Ye rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked," Prov. ii. 14. Ye delight in nothing but sin; and therefore ye regard not what your conscience saith, what the word of God, what his judgments and blessings say to you, but will as soon part with your lives as with your sins: for not to sin is like death to you: "Wickedness is sweet in your mouths, ye hide it under your tongues; ye spare it and forsake it not; but keep it still within your mouths," Job xx. 12, 13. What think ye, can a person who cleaves so with his lusts to sins, pray that God would forgive him his sins? and when he even repeats this petition, after his manner, doth he then mean what he saith? surely no. (b) Neither do ye pray that your debts may be forgiven, who are so little concerned about your sins. Ye know not how abominable they are, nor that they render you guilty before God, that his wrath lieth upon you, that he will surely set them in order before your eyes, and punish you on account of them. Ye know indeed that ye are great sinners, but this is only from hearsay, ye see no sins in yourselves, and would not be able to reckon up even six sins. Do others point them out to you, ye excuse them, and plead for them. David saith of you, and others of your character, Psalm xxxvi. 2. "He flattereth himself in his own eyes, when his iniquity is found, which is hateful.' How then can ye pray to be forgiven? (c) Neither can ye, who have some knowledge of your sins, but think that ye have obtained forgiveness of them, or will obtain it without much difficulty. Ye doubt not but that God hath forgiven your sins already. And why do ye think so? Because Christ hath satisfied for sins? hath he then satisfied for all men, and for you in particular? what proof have ye of this? do ye think so, because ye live among Christians, and have received the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper? what do ye think then of Judas,

and of Simon the sorcerer, and of "those who will say at the last day, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence," according to Luke xiii. 26? or do ye imagine that your sins are forgiven, because they were committed a long time since, and are forgotten, and God doth not punish you for them? Thus the people also thought, when they said, Jer. ii. 35. "Surely I am innocent, for his anger is turned from me, Behold," said the Lord, "I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned." Hear what the Lord saith, Psalm l. 21, 22. "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." Or is it your opinion, that ye will obtain forgiveness by merely uttering this petition, or by a superficial sorrow, or by a civil amendment! Alas, how shamefully do ye deceive yourselves, and show that ye have never yet called upon God aright to forgive your sins! (d) Much less have ye prayed for the forgiveness of your sins, who retain so much displeasure, and revenge against your neighbour, on account of the smallest injury which he hath done you, that if ye might but have your will, and if it were in your power, ye would even "slay a man for your wounding, and a young man for your hurt,"* like that wicked Lamech, Gen. iv. 23. No, say ye, I forgive indeed, but I do not forget. When ye then say, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," do ye not pray that God would take vengeance of you or your evil deeds, and that he would not forgive them, at least, that he would not forget them?

Is this so, then all your debts, which render you guilty, lie still upon you, and the wrath of God lieth on you; for your debts are not yet forgiven, since ye have not done aught yet to obtain forgiveness. And how shall ye then obtain forgiveness? Ye cannot as long as ye indulge your careless imaginations. Hear what the Lord himself saith, Deut. xxix. 19, 29. "If he hear the words of this curse, and bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst, the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven." Ye will be forced to pay all your debts yourselves by bearing the wrath of the Lord for ever: and ye "shall be delivered for this end to the tormentors,"

* According to the Dutch translation.

Mat. xviii. 34. How grievous and dreadful will this be to you! Although ye do not now feel the wrath of God, under which ye lie, but harden yourselves against it, "God will render to every man according to his deeds: to them that are contentious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath shall be rendered: tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil." Rom. ii. 8, 9. "Deceive not yourselves with vain imaginations, as though your end will not be so sad: surely God will wound the head of his enemies; and the hairy scalp of such an one, as goeth on still in his trespasses," Psalm lxviii. 21. "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 1 Peter iv. 18.

Are ye desirous of escaping eternal destruction, and the wrath to come, (a) Endeavour then to know your sins, and to see how abominable your heart and actions have been from your birth even until this day, and that ye are "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity," Acts viii. 23. The Lord requires this, in order to your recovery: He saith, "only acknowledge thine iniquity." (b) Nevertheless behold your sins, as they are in their proper nature, as violating the majesty of God, provoking the eyes of his glory, rejecting his favour, and rendering you exceedingly guilty: yea, apply your eyes and ears to the door of hell, and see and hear how the damned weep with their eyes, and gnash with their teeth, how they wring their hands, and bewail themselves for ever, that your hardened hearts may at length become contrite. (c) Lay aside your imagination, that it is so easy to obtain the forgiveness of your sins; for this imagination retains you in your careless humor. What grievous sufferings did sin procure Christ! How was Job forced to complain of it! Job xiii. 24—26. How was David bowed down under it! Psalm xxxviii. How did Heman lament on account of it! Psalm lxxxviii. and how "bitterly did Peter weep" for his sin! Matt. xxvi. 75, and shall ye obtain forgiveness by a faint sigh, by ineffectual words, and by only behaving yourselves somewhat more decently? (d) "Confess your sins" circumstantially to the Lord, "and forsake them;" for then, as Solomon saith, "shall ye obtain mercy," Prov. xxviii. 15. Think not that ye will obtain forgiveness, as long as ye retain one sin willingly and wittingly: "Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson,

they shall be as wool," Isaiah i. 16—18. (c) Flee with your sins to the Mediator, that ye may seek and find forgiveness of your debts in his satisfaction: for "God hath set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins," Rom iii 25.

But, believers, ye who have already obtained forgiveness of your sins by your first entrance into the covenant of grace, and by embracing the Son of God, it behooves you nevertheless to pray daily for forgiveness. How often do ye now yet transgress against your Father! It is not enough always to recover from your sins, and to forsake them, and in the mean while to suffer your debts to remain uncancelled, and not to seek continually a new reconciliation: your High Priest hath put this prayer in your mouths, that ye may seek pardon of your Father every day. Endeavour therefore to obtain grace and pardon day by day. And for this end,

1. Lay your daily offences to heart, that ye may be grieved for them, and may, with believing David, "be sorry for your sins," Psalm xxxviii. 18 The children of God can never be in a more wretched state, than when they are not sensible of their sins. The church, seeing this, complained, Isaiah lxiii. 17, "O Lord, why hast thou hardened our heart from thy fear?" Your sins are more aggravated now than before your conversion; for they are committed against your loving Father, against so many and such great favours, against greater light and conviction, and against your solemn obligations. All this ought surely to affect your souls, and to grieve you; we will never seek forgiveness in earnest, until our souls are heavy laden with our sins; therefore reflect often upon your sinful behaviour, that ye may be grieved, and ashamed, and may seek forgiveness heartily.

2. Confess also your sins to the Lord in their aggravating circumstances, with detestation of them, that ye may humble and abase yourselves before your Father, like Job, chap. xlii. 5, 6, and Ezra, ix. 3—15. We are sometimes backward to this we dare not behold our sins attentively, it would oppress and confound us too much, and we cannot endure this. But the soul must know, that while she conducts thus, she will not obtain forgiveness, God will continue to hide his countenance from her, and her grief will become still heavier: "When I kept silence," saith David, Psalm xxxii. 3—5, "my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin unto thee,

and mine iniquity have I not hid: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." We can expect forgiveness only upon our confessing of our sins: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John i. 9.

3. Pray also to your Father that he would forgive your sins. The Saviour commands you this in the text. Urge him by representing to him his fatherly heart, "that he is good and ready to forgive," Psalm lxxxvi. 5. Plead upon the perfect satisfaction of his Son, that he hath satisfied for your sins, that the Father gave him a perfect acquittal by his resurrection from the dead, that he is become righteousness to you, and is exalted by the right hand of God, to give you remission of sins, and that he intercedes for you. Lay hold of him repeatedly for reconciliation, and lay all your sins upon the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world. John i. and persevere, until ye find peace, assurance and an evidence that your sins are forgiven. David was not satisfied, when Nathan said to him, The Lord hath put away thy sins," 2 Sam. but he cried still to the Lord, Psalm li. 8, "Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice."

4. Preserve cautiously and circumspectly your reconciled frame, that your indiscretions may not disturb you again: "When the Lord speaks peace to his people and to his saints, they must not turn again to folly," Psalm lxxxv. 8. Ye know that the Lord is jealous, and that he soon hides his countenance from you on account of your sins, and what pains ye must take, before he will cause his face to shine on you again. Hurry not nevertheless from him with your sins, when ye have misbehaved, through discouragement, with the church, Isaiah lxiv. 6, 7, but go to him for renewed forgiveness: "My little children," saith John, "these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins," 1 John ii. 1, 2.

5. Deal now with your neighbour as your Father deals with you. How effectually doth he forgive your sins, and continually! Do ye so also: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, if any man have a quarrel against against any; even as Christ forgave you, so do ye also," Col. iii. 12, 13. And be assured that the Lord hath forgiven your iniquity, and covered all your sins. Yea, he hath taken away all his wrath, and

hath turned himself from the fierceness of his anger," Psalm lxxxv. 2, 3. "He hath sworn, that he will not be wroth with you, nor rebuke you," Isaiah liv. 9. And he will therefore one day place you before his throne, where there will be no more sin, nor curses against you. Rev. xxii. 3, and where, according to Isaiah xxxiii 24, "none of the inhabitants shall say, I am sick:" for "the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." Amen.

THE

SIXTH PETITION

EXPLAINED;

WITH THE CONCLUSION.

LII. LORD'S DAY.

Matt. vi. 13. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen.

Q. 127. *Which is the sixth Petition?*

A. "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;" that is, since we are so weak in ourselves, that we cannot stand a moment; and besides this, since our mortal enemies, the devil, the world, and our own flesh cease not to assault us; do thou therefore preserve and strengthen us by the power of thy holy Spirit, that we may not be overcome in this spiritual warfare, but constantly and strenuously may resist our foes, till at last we obtain a complete victory.

Q. 128. *How dost thou conclude thy prayer?*

A. "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever;" that is, all these we ask of thee, because thou being our king and almighty, art willing and able to give us all good; and all this we pray for, that thereby not we, but thy holy name may be glorified for ever.

Q. 129. *What doth the word "Amen" signify?*

A. "Amen" signifies, it shall truly and certainly be; for my prayer is more assuredly heard of God, than I feel in my heart that I desire these things of him.

ALTHOUGH justification and sanctification are distinct benefits, they do nevertheless always accompany each other, and are never separated in any person one from the other. Justification is one benefit, and sanctification is another. Justification takes away the guilt of sin, but sanctification cleanses from the filth of sin. Justification is effected by the blood of Christ, but sanctification by his Spirit. The former brings a sinner into a different condition, making him a friend, when he was before an enemy of God, but the latter brings him to a different disposition, rendering him a lover of God, when he was before a hater of him. Yet these benefits are not so distinct, that they are ever separated the one from the other; where the one is, there also the other is always with it. The Corinthians "were washed and sanctified, as well as justified; 1 Cor. vi. 11. "Christ is made to them who are his, sanctification, as well as justification," according to 1 Cor. i. 30. God justifieth the elect sinner, that he may sanctify him: "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared," saith David, to the Lord, Psalm cxxx. 4. No sooner doth a person obtain of God forgiveness and justification, than he also becomes desirous of conducting himself in a manner that is acceptable to God; but his enemies also soon bestir themselves, that they may seduce him to iniquity: he, knowing this, and being afraid of sinning, will also resist and encounter his enemies. They are nevertheless too mighty for him, and he hath but little power: how often do they foil him before he is aware! what shall the poor soul do? Jesus teacheth her to cry to the Father: "Lead us not into temptation," &c.

The Saviour had taught the children of God to pray for the pardon of their sins: but their enemies, who would be too mighty for them, would soon encounter them again, that they might seduce them to new sins. He, knowing their weakness, admonishes them

to flee to the Father, and cry to him, "Lead us not into temptation," that they may thus hallow his name, to which this petition is directed, as well as the foregoing.

We must with the instructor explain here three particulars;

I. The sixth petition,

II. The conclusion,

III. How we must seal our prayer with "Amen."

I. In the sixth petition we pray in the first place against temptation, and then call upon God for deliverance from evil. The word *peirasmos*, which occurs here in the Greek, signifies an examination and trial of persons and things, that we may know whether they be in reality what they seem to be. Thus a man "must examine and try himself, whether he be in the faith," 2 Cor xiii. 5. God also tempts and tries men, not for his own sake, for he is allknowing, but that he may discover their sincerity and virtue to others. For this purpose he sometimes gives them a probationary command; as, when "he tempted Abraham, he commanded him to offer up his son Isaac," Gen. xxii. or he exposeth them to adversities and "tribulations, which befall them for trial," James i. 2. 1 Peter iv. 12, or he gives them "his Spirit, that they may know the things that are freely given them of God," 1 Cor. ii. 12. We do not pray against such temptations in this petition. David prayed that "the Lord would examine him, prove and try him," Psalm xxvi. 2. cxxxix. 23, 24. But the Saviour speaks here of an evil temptation, by which we are enticed and seduced to sin; for "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed," James i. 14. See also 1 Tim. vi. 9.

The children of God have "three mighty and deadly enemies, namely, the devil, the world, and their own flesh, who cease not to assault them." The devil is the head, who rules the rest; therefore he is emphatically called "the tempter," Mat. iv. 3. 1 Thess. iii. 5. He is "Satan," the adversary who tempts, 1 Cor. vii. 5. He doth this, (1) by offering inducements to sinning, and by bringing men into a situation, in which they can be easily enticed; he proposes to Eve the desirableness of the tree: to Achan he represents the preciousness of the spoil: he directs David to Bathsheba, and he urges Peter to go into the hall of Caiaphas, that he may sift him like wheat. (2) He suggests also evil thoughts. He knows wonderfully well how to maintain a secret correspondence with our spirits, and to exhibit to them the seeming honour, pleasure and profit, that will accrue from sin, and to influence the affections so, that the soul is enticed to sin insensibly, and before she is aware: "He put into

the heart of Judas to betray Christ," John xiii 2, and "filled the heart of Ananias, that he should lie to the Holy Ghost, and keep back part of the price of the land," Acts v. 3. (3) The devil knows how to darken and stupify the understanding, so that it perceives neither good nor evil, by which means the will is powerfully urged to choose that which is wrong: "The God of this world blinds the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them," saith Paul, 2 Cor. iv. 4. (4) Sometimes Satan comes with power and with an ovebearing force, and drives the soul headlong into sin: conscience indeed sometimes cries out against sin; and others dissuade from it: but he, having the ear of the soul, will not suffer her to pause, in order to attend as she ought to that which would restrain her from sinning, but he urges her violently on, and crosses every good advice. When "he provoked David to number Israel," he drove him on so, that he would not hearken to Joab's advice, but "his word prevailed," 1 Chron. xxi. 1—4. "He works" more especially so powerfully "in the children of disobedience," Eph. ii. 2. "He takes them captive in his snare at his will," 2 Tim. ii. 26. and "he persuades them, and prevails also," 1 Kings xxii. 22. He can manage his temptations with wonderful subtilty, so that men do not observe that he tempteth them, and the children of God themselves ascribe his temptations wholly to their own corruption, unless they be greatly advanced: "He beguiled Eve" herself, when she was yet uncorrupted, "by his subtilty," 2 Cor. xi. 3. Therefore he will often begin his attacks with asking questions, that he may influence the mind to consider his propositions, and may cause it to waver, and especially when a person is in his weakest condition, and alone. And that he may not seem to have an evil design, he will pretend a wonderful appearance of a great and holy zeal, and even swear that he seeks our happiness only. See Gen. iii. 1—6, and thus he "transforms himself into an angel of light," as the apostle saith, 2 Cor. xi. 14. But when he attacks a person, who is further advanced, and who knows his devices, he appears like "a messenger of Satan," 2 Cor. xii. 7. He hath indeed wonderful artifices and "devices" 2 Cor. ii. 11, "wiles," Eph. vi. 11, and "depths," Rev. ii. 24. If any desire to see his mysteries unfolded, let them read what an eminently godly man* hath written concerning the temptations of Satan.

The other enemy, who tempts the people of God, in order to se-

* William Brakel in his *Redelyke Godsdienst*, or Reasonable Service, part 2. ch. 53.

duce them is the world, of which the devil is "the prince and god," since he governs the world, and the world obeys him, John xiv. 30. 2 Cor. iv. 4. But by the world we must not understand here the frame of the world, with all that is in it, except so far as the creature, being subject to vanity through sin, is abused by the sinner; but by the world we understand chiefly worldly-minded persons, "who are of the world, and therefore speak of the world, and the world heareth them," 1 John iv. 5, and also "worldly lusts which pass away," 1 John ii. 17, which world tempts and seduceth men, either by flattering and alluring them with her honours, pleasures and profits, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," 1 John ii. 16, or by hatred, persecuting them, who will not do as she doth. The Lord Jesus saith to them who are his, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you," John xv. 19.

Nevertheless the devil and the world would not be able to seduce us in this manner, if there were not a traitor within the soul, who unites with the devil and the world to destroy the poor soul. The flesh is that traitor, namely our inbred depravity, 'the old man, the body of sin," Rom. vi. 6. "The motions of sin, which are by the law, and which work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death; indwelling sin, the law of sin, which is in the members, "Rom. vii. 5, 29, 23, for "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed," James i. 14. One while it will oppose the truth of God by foolish conceptions, "imaginations and high things," 2 Cor. x. 5, then it works up every abomination, "like a troubled sea and a fountain," Isaiah lvii 20, Jer. vi. 7. Mat. xv. 19. Yea, "the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be," Rom. viii. 7. "Doth the Spirit lust against the flesh, the flesh lusteth also against the Spirit: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would," Gal. v. 17.

But why doth the Saviour choose that we should pray to the Father, that he would not lead us into temptation? doth he mislead and entice his children to evil? surely no; for "he is of purer eyes than to behold evil," Hab. i. 13. "Far be it from God, that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity," so we say with Elihu, Job xxxiv. 10. "Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed,"

according to James i. 14. This petition must however have a certain meaning; we may not therefore wholly exclude the direction of God from sin. No man will say that God commands or works sin, or that he urges a person to commit it; but every one will allow that he permits sin in a holy manner, not by giving license to sin, but by not hindering it. Is he then a mere spectator of sin? Thus the Pelagians think: but the word of God teaches us that God doth more with respect to sin, than merely permit it: for it saith that God "blinds and hardens" a person, Exod. iv. 21, Isaiah iv. 9, 10, lxiii. 17. "He sends a lying spirit," 1 Kings xxii. 23. "He turned the heart of the Egyptians to hate his people," Psalm cv. 25. "He gives men up to vile affections, and to a reprobate mind, to do things which are not convenient, Rom. i. 26, 28, and "he sends them a strong delusion, so that they believe a lie," 2 Thess. ii. 11. Surely these words denote more than a bare permission. We must nevertheless beware that we do not impeach the holiness of God, by endeavouring to look too deep into his unsearchable ways, and we must not think nor say more than the Lord himself testifieth of this work of his, which is, (a) that he brings a person into this or that situation, in which he will be tempted and assaulted; for even "Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, that he might be tempted of the devil," Mat. iv. 1. (b) The word of God saith also, that God sometimes lets the tempters loose upon a person, to tempt him. We see how the devil was let loose upon Job and Paul, Job i. and ii. 2 Cor. xii. 7—9. "The devil provoked David to number the people," according to 1 Chron. xxi. 1, and it is said, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, that "the Lord himself moved him." How shall we understand this, except of letting Satan loose upon David? (c) The Bible saith also that God withholds his restraining influence, by which a person, being left to himself, will certainly sin. It is said of holy Hezekiah, that "his heart was lifted up;" for "God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart," 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, 31. Therefore it is also said of Israel, that "God gave them up unto their own hearts lusts, so that they walked in their own counsels," Psalm lxxxi. 12. And God manifests thus his sovereign power in a holy manner, inasmuch as he is not obligated to man. He reveals thus also his goodness and justice by humbling his children, and by destroying the ungodly, "that he may show his power, and that his name may be declared throughout all the earth," Rom. ix. 17.

When we pray against temptation, we then also call on God for

deliverance from the evil one.* The words *apo ton ponerou*, which occur here in the Greek, may be rendered "from evil," and we should thus pray against the evil of sin. But because we are drawn by temptation into the evil of sin, and this is opposed to temptation, we may with the greatest propriety understand this with our translators of the evil one, who tempteth us, and therefore of the devil, the world, and our own flesh. Our flesh is evil, it is "an evil treasure," Mat. xii. 35. "There dwelleth no good thing in it," Rom. vii. 18. "The world is evil," Gal. i. 4. "It lieth in wickedness," 1 John v. 19. But the prince of the world is more especially evil. He is called "the evil one," Mat. v. 37, xiii. 19, 38. He is evil and evilminded toward all that is of God, and that is good: it is his disposition to be evil: he loves and delights in evil, and is the cause of all evil.

The Lord doth indeed deliver his people from the evil one, when "he delivers them out of the power of darkness, and translates them into the kingdom of his dear Son," Col. i. 13, and when he "gives them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, so that they recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, in which they were taken captive by him at his will," 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26 The Son of God "binds the strong man, and spoils his goods," Mat. xii. 29. But those evil enemies endeavour to bring them under their power again, and therefore tempt them time after time. Their Father however delivers them continually, and particularly, (a) when he places them out of the way, and beyond the reach of temptation, Jesus knowing the weakness of his apostles, surrendered himself to those who came to take him, upon condition that they should "let them go their way." "If ye seek me," said he. John xviii. 8, "let these go their way." Having learned by frequent experience, that the least occurrence perverts them, they are fearful of every circumstance that might seduce them: and therefore they pray to be preserved from it. (b) Also when the Lord binds and controls the tempters, so that they have not the power to entice them: "The Lord sometimes rebukes Satan," Zech. iii. 1, 2, binds and controls him, Rev. xx. 1—3. (c) He also affords the soul sometimes in her temptation his restraining grace and power, by which she is enabled to fight and conquer, "preserving and strengthening her by the power of his Holy Spirit, so that she is not overcome in the spiritual warfare, but resists her foes constantly and strenuously: He keeps her from the hour of temptation," according to his promise, Rev. iii,

* According to the Dutch translation.

10 He invigorates her conscience, which saith to her continually in the name of the Lord, "Seek thou my face," Psalm xxvii. 8. He renders her watchful and careful, "setting a watch before her mouth, and keeping the door of her lips," as she prays, Psalm cxli. 3. He puts his fear into her, and "unites her heart to fear his name, that she may walk in his truth," as David prayed, Psalm lxxxvi. 11. Yea, he fills her sometimes with so much comforting grace, that she is not afraid of the most violent assaults, but saith, "The Lord is my light, and my salvation whom shall I fear?" &c. Psalm xxvii. 1, or he speaks a word of encouragement to her, "My grace is sufficient for thee," 2 Cor. xii. 9, and he places her above the reach of her enemies, and becomes "a strong habitation to her, whereunto she may continually resort, and he gives thus commandment to save her," Psalm lxxi. 3. The believer prays also for this restraining grace, with David, Psalm xix. 13. 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins," &c. (d) Are the children of God sometimes enticed by a temptation, the Lord limits the temptation, that it may not proceed too far, and that the life of the soul may not be trodden down to the ground, and that the enemy may not wholly overcome her, as we may see in the temptations of Job and Peter, Job i. 12, ii. 6. Luke xxii. 31, 32. Yea, the Lord raiseth his favourites up again, after they have fallen, that he may deliver them: "Though the righteous fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand," saith David, Psalm xxxvii. 24, and his Son saith, Prov. xxiv. 16. "A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again." Upon which they begin to fight anew, with their Father's aid, and thus "resist constantly and strenuously, until at last they obtain a complete victory," and exclaim triumphantly with Paul, 1 Tim. iv. 7, 8. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," &c. (e) And finally, he conducts them to that glory, where there will not be any more temptation or curse; but all their enemies he casts into perdition, Rev xx. 14, xxi. 27, xxii. 3.

As every believer must pray thus for himself, so they must all, and each of them pray thus for the whole church, and therefore say, Lead "us" not into temptation, but deliver "us" from evil. All the enemies combine together against all the believers; they must therefore "strive together in one spirit, and with one mind: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints," Philip. i. 27. Eph. vi. 18. But we must not therefore think

that this petition is prophetical, and that it hath respect to our times, in which the temptation of Antichrist begins to work powerfully; for we have no foundation for such an opinion: if men were not prepossessed with a notion concerning the seven periods of the church, they would not seek for such a prophecy here, and there will never be a time in which it will not be our duty to offer up this petition in its fullest extent and emphasis.*

The Saviour commands the children of God to offer up this petition for certain reasons. For, (1) the tempters are their mortal enemies, they are many, crafty, mighty, cruel and unwearied: "They cease not to assault us:" there is then no better remedy against them, than "to pray that we may not enter into temptation," Mat. xxvi. 41. "This kind goeth not forth, but by prayer and fasting," Mark ix. 29. (2) The children of God hate every sin, and "every false way," Psalm cxix. 128, and therefore every temptation also, that may easily seduce them to sin They cannot declare nor prevent this better than by praying against temptation, like David, Psalm cxix. 10. "Let me not wander from thy commandments." (3) They know what a revolting heart they have, that "they are ready to halt," Psalm xxxviii. 17, and therefore they are afraid of themselves, and pray that they may be preserved from themselves: "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips, incline not mine heart to any evil thing," thus the man of God prayed, Psalm cxli. 3, 4. (4) They have a great desire, and a steadfast inclination to conduct themselves in such a manner, as is pleasing to the Lord: but how shall they do this, unless the Lord preserve them? therefore they say with the same man, "I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly," Psalm cxix. 8. (5) The Lord hath also promised "that he would put his Spirit within them, and cause them to walk in his statutes, and keep his judgments, and do them;" but he will not do this, unless they call on him for it; "I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it: yet I will be inquired of by the house of Israel for this, to do it for them, saith the Lord," Ezek. xxxvi. 27, 36, 37. (6) Moreover, they are not able to withstand their enemies, or to perform their duty: shall they not then cry to the Lord for help, and say, "Thou hast commanded me to keep thy precepts diligently: O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes," Psalm cxix. 4, 5. "We are indeed so weak in ourselves, that we cannot stand a single moment." And therefore we are taught to betake ourselves always with our prayers to the Father.

* The author intends in this passage the Cocceians

II. Shall we now, after we have uttered all our petitions, break off abruptly? No, the Saviour requires, that we should end and conclude our prayer in a suitable manner. Therefore he teacheth his favourites to say also, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever." The kingdom of the Father denotes here not only the kingdom of nature, in which he reigns over all things, but also the kingdom of grace, in which he reigns over his children in Christ. This is explained in the second petition. But how is it possible to govern such a great kingdom alone? the Father hath also "power," even an almighty power, to direct all things with one word according to his will. And hence it appears, that "the glory" is his also even that brightness and lustre, which shines forth from all his perfections and ways in his kingly and almighty direction, by which he excels all others. But his kingdom, his power and his glory will not descend finally into the dust, as the greatest governments and glory of earthly kings will: but all the divine excellencies will endure and be glorified more and more for ever. Hear what Paul saith of this almighty, glorious and eternal king; "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever," 1 Tim. i. 17. See also 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16.

The Papists, who endeavour to excite a suspicion that the word of God hath been corrupted, and is imperfect, imagine that these words were not added to this prayer by our Saviour, but that they were imprudently foisted in by a certain Greek, because some of the Latin fathers do not mention this addition, and Luke also omits it, Luke xi. 2—4. But it is certain, that the Lord Jesus himself added these words to this prayer; for such doxologies are usual in the conclusion of prayers in the word of God, as we may see, 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12. 1 Tim. i 17, vi. 15, 16. Jude vs. 25. Rev. i. 4—6, and besides this the most ancient copies of the New Testament do also contain these words, not only the Greek, but also the Syriac, and Arabic; and the Greek fathers acknowledge these words It doth not follow, because Luke hath not these words, that they did not stand anciently in Matthew, since one evangelist records in more instances certain particulars, which are omitted by the others.

As now the address of this prayer must be referred not only to the first, but to all the following petitions, so also this conclusion must be applied not only to the last, but also to all the foregoing prayers. And to what purpose is this appendix? Is it in order to foretell the last and most glorious state of the church, which we certainly ex-

pect? no: for it ought not then to be referred to the foregoing petitions, but to be used separately from them. But we conceive that it serves, (a) as a thanksgiving, which must be added to our prayers; "All our requests must be made known to God by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving," Philip. iv. 6. Thus David also used these words, 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12. The believer began his prayer with the glory of God in the first petition, and he ends it with the same, when he concludes in this manner. (b) These words serve also as motives and grounds of confidence to the children of God in their praying; for if the kingdom, the power, and the glory be his for ever, then it concerns him, and he is willing and able to grant their requests, and he will have the honour of it for ever, "when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe," 2 Thess. i. 10. Thus the psalmist mentions the kingdom of God and his everlasting glory, as a motive and ground of his confidence in his prayer, Psalm v. 2, "Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my king and my God." See also Psalm xx. 9 lxxiv. 12. cxv. 1, 2.

III. It is proper that we should also seal our prayer with "Amen." This is a Hebrew word, and signifieth truth, and it serves, (a) to confirm the truth of our desire: "The prophet Jeremiah said Amen; the Lord do so," Jer. xxviii. 6. The believing supplicant declares his sincere desire and inclination that God would "give ear to his prayer, which goeth not out of feigned lips," like David, Psalm xvii. 1. (b) It tends also to confirm the confidence of believers, "that their prayer is more assuredly heard of God, than they feel in their hearts, that they desire these things of him." "For "Amen" signifies that a thing is certain: "All the promises of God are in him, yea, and in him amen," saith the apostle, 2 Cor. i. 20. The believing supplicant hath also a foundation of confidence when he saith Amen, that his prayer will be heard: "Surely he will be gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry: when he shall hear it, he will answer thee," saith the prophet in the name of the Lord by his Spirit, Jer. xxx. 19. When the children of God pray according to the prescript of Jesus, they pray according to his will, which he will then certainly hear. John saith, "This is the confidence, that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions, that we desired of him," 1 John v. 14, 15.

APPLICATION.

That I may not be too prolix, I will not busy myself with confuting the Pelagians, who deny God's efficacious government of sin, and the inability of man to resist temptation; for it is evident of itself, that they err, if we must pray that we may not be led into temptation, but be delivered from the evil one. Nor will I say much at present concerning the vanity of the Papists, who imagine that they can expel the devil by their exorcisms, which is as vain as "the behaviour of the vagabond exorcists at Ephesus," Acts xix. 13—16. But I may not forbear saying something of those who conceive that the devil hath no more power at all in the world, and that he is chained up in hell like a banddog Is this petition then to no purpose? Is all that is said in the whole bible concerning the actions of the devil nothing but vanity, and spoken only according to the foolish opinions of the people? We cannot conspire better with the devil, than by denying all his temptations and assaults; for it is the aim of Satan, and his subtility to conceal his wiles. When we deny them, do we not then assist him? "When Zebul said to Gaal, who saw the army of Abimelech coming toward him in a hostile manner, Thou sawest the shadow of the mountains, as if they were men," Judges ix. 36, did he not then manifest that he had conspired with Abimelech to destroy Gaal? Why then should we not think that those persons assist the devil, who endeavour to banish a moderate fear of his seductions out of the hearts of men? Therefore such have justly been condemned by the church.

But when ye, hearers, utter this petition in praying after your manner, are ye then in earnest and sincere? Surely ye are not, (a) who know nothing of any danger, or of any tempters, but are, like the men of Laish, quiet and secure. Ye are not afraid of sins to which ye are enticed, and still more, to which ye will be seduced; ye think that ye can preserve yourselves; if any one should tell you what abominations there are in your hearts, and that ye will perhaps commit them one time or other, ye would wonder, and say with resentment, like Hazael, when the horrible cruelties which he should perpetrate upon Israel, were foretold to him, "Am I then a

* The author refers here to Dr. Balthazar Bekker, a minister of the reformed church at Amsterdam. See a note concerning him on the third sermon.

dog?" 2 Kings viii. 12, 13. But there cannot be a greater evidence that ye are yet really under the dominion, and are taken captive in the snare of the devil at his will; for he seeks to lull those who are under his power, quietly and placidly to sleep, that they may not awake, and escape from him. Jesus shows this, when he saith, Luke xi. 21, "when a strong man armed keepeth his palace, all his goods are in peace." (b) It is evident, that ye mean not what ye say, when ye repeat this petition, because ye lead yourselves into temptation, and are not willing to be delivered from that of the evil one; for ye pursue after vanities; is there a fair any where, or is this or that show to be seen, or doth any idle company assemble in one place or another, can ye be even torn from these things? must ye not be present, do ye not then lead yourselves into temptation, like "Dinah, who went out to see the daughters of the land, and was defiled?" Gen. xxxiv. When ye are so set upon wealth, and "will be rich, do ye not then fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition?" 1 Tim. vi. 9. How often do ye indulge in musing and meditating with delight upon the lusts of the flesh! by which ye tempt yourselves, and kindle, by vehement motions of your lusts, a burning heat of sin in your souls. Yea, ye will not be delivered from these temptations, "evil is indeed sweet in your mouths, and ye spare it, like a delicious morsel under your tongues: But thus ye are drawn away of your own lusts, and enticed; then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death," James i. 14, 15. (c) And ye act still more abominably, who lead not only yourselves, but others also into temptation: it is not enough for you, that ye yourselves hasten to destruction, but ye will drag others also with you. In this manner do lascivious persons act, like the harlot whom Solomon describes, Prov. vii. And thus also those luxurious feasters, who invite others to their fellowship, and provoke them to gluttony: "Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine," &c. Isaiah lvi. 12. Is there any one, who will not do as ye do, or who seeks to be delivered from the evil one by conversion, will ye not scoff at him, yea, oppose him? "He who departeth from evil, maketh himself a prey; but the Lord seeth it, and it displeaseth him," lix. 15. (d) Neither do ye pray aright, who are satisfied with barely saying this petition, and think that mumbling it over will have a great effect, as if the devil would be exceedingly frightened, and flee, when he only heard these words uttered. Miserable men! how blind are ye! is this petition then a charm, to expel the devil and every hellish spectre? and is God pleased with your

saying of these words without heart, and without a holy fear of temptation, and without a hearty desire to be delivered from your misery? surely no: God requireth sincerity. But know that "God will deal wonderfully and marvellously with the people, who draw near to him with their mouths, and honour him with their lips," This God himself, who is the Amen, saith, Isaiah xxix. 13, 14.

Alas, sinners, behold your misery, and endeavour to recover out of the snare of the devil, in which he takes you captive at his will. He seeks to draw you to destruction, and that unawares, without your knowledge, that he may cause you to inherit his perdition. Ye are afraid of seeing him in a bodily shape, but it behooves you to be more afraid of him, when he conceals himself in his subtilty: he goeth about you in a secret manner, like a roaring lion, that he may devour you. O be concerned, and cry earnestly to the Lord. that he would deliver you from him, from the world, and still more from yourselves.

But, believers, who have learned by experience, and have frequently seen that sin lightly besets you through the temptation, not only of Satan, and of the world, but also of your own corrupt flesh, endeavour to be delivered from those evil ones. And therefore,

1. Behold your obligation to serve the Lord. It is your duty to serve him on account of his eternal glory, which he possesseth, as an almighty king: "Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O Lord," saith the prophet, "thou art great, and thy name is great in might; who would not fear thee, thou King of nations, for to thee doth it appertain; forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all the kingdoms there is none like thee?" Jer. x. 6, 7. How many favours hath he bestowed on you, as your Father in Christ, and that only, that ye might live for him, and not for yourselves. The Son of God "gave himself for you, that he might redeem you from all iniquity, and purify you to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Titus ii. 14. Have ye not entered into an engagement to him and "sworn," as it were, with an Amen to his demand, "and will ye not perform it, that ye will keep his righteous judgments?" Psalm cxix. 106. This obligation and this bond ought to have a great weight on your souls, and should induce you to watch with greater caution against temptation.

2. Be firmly resolved, and earnestly desirous to live in a holy and tender manner before the Lord, according to his will. With Paul we ought to "follow after perfection," and therefore to "forget the things that are behind, and to reach forth to those which are before, and to press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of

God in Christ Jesus," Philip. iii. 12, 14. How good is it to look often into ourselves, to see our declensions, and to bestir ourselves anew, like king David, when he said, Psalm cxix. 59, 60. "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies, I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments." For when we have such a desire to holiness, we will strive the more earnestly and manfully.

3. Are ye desirous to excel in holiness, and to have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of God, do not then study your ease, but prepare for fighting: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life," saith the the Lord Christ, Luke xiii. 24. Matt. vii. 14. Know that your tempters will harrass you; they are not pleased with your withdrawing from their service; they seek by alluring and by afflicting means to bring you back to them; if they cannot prevail, they will then cast as many stumbling-blocks in your way as they can; and ye must overcome them all, or "ye will not be crowned," as that valiant champion Paul speaks, 2 Tim. ii. 5. God himself, when he delivered you out of the power of darkness, called you to fight: "Fight then the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto ye are also called," 1 Tim. vi. 12.

4. Learn by all means to know your enemies, and their wiles, otherwise ye cannot guard against their assaults and temptations; but when we know them, we have partly vanquished them. Paul desired that the Corinthians should confirm their love toward the penitent incestuous person," as he himself also did, "lest," saith he, "Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices," 2 Cor. ii. 8, 11. Therefore observe well their depths, and their wiles, and how, and by what ways they have often insnared you, that ye may know in what manner to watch against them. It is also necessary to distinguish when, and in what manner each enemy assaults you. Sometimes they will all three attack the soul at once; but sometimes also each separately, although they soon hasten to assist each other: observe how. The flesh rises and works within by vile and evil thoughts and lusts; the world enticeth by her honours, gayeties, profits and pleasures; and the devil joins often these, that he may urge the soul on to these things by representing the world in the fairest colours. But in some cases he is active alone, yet in such a secret manner that the soul knows not but that the abominations, which are injected into her, proceed from her own depravity; which therefore sorely distresses her. But it is certain, that the temptation proceeds from the devil only, when the

thoughts that are injected into her, are unnatural, inhuman and blasphemous; which will therefore also disturb the soul, and are suggested likewise very suddenly, and when a person had not thought of them before. We may justly call them "fiery darts, buffetings of Satan, and sharp thorns in our flesh," Eph. v. 16, 2 Cor. xii. 7.

5. Arm yourselves against these enemies with the truth, with righteousness, with the preparation of the gospel, with hope, the word of God and prayer. We may learn of Paul, Eph. vi. 11—18, how we ought to arm ourselves with these weapons, and how necessary they are. Our time will not permit us to extend our discourse, and therefore we do not enlarge upon this.

6. Be watchful and on your guard, that ye may not be attacked unawares. The spiritual warriour must be continually in arms, he must look before him, and about him, and be thoughtful, that he may not be attacked either secretly or suddenly: "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour," 1 Peter v. 8. "Let discretion preserve you, understanding keep you," Prov. ii. 11. Oppose forthwith sinful emotions and injections; do not pause long, for otherwise the enemy will make a great breach in your souls.

7. Beware of pride, and an imagination that ye can keep yourselves from this and that sin; for this will bring you to a fall. Peter's sad experience, Mat. xxvi. 31, 35, 69—75, ought to teach us humility: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," saith the apostle, 1 Cor. x. 12. And "be not highminded, but fear," Rom. xi. 20. Therefore it behooves each of us to pray in the most fervent manner with David, Psalm xix. 13. "Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the transgression."

8. Be not however too timorous, or too fearful of your enemies: they would make use of such a discouragement to their advantage, and your power would forsake you: "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small," saith the wise man, Prov. xxiv. 10, but "watch, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong," 1 Cor. xvi. 13. Ye have to do with conquered enemies: "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world," saith the Captain of the Lord's host, John xvi. 33. They have indeed "all fallen before him," ye need only "slay them after your Lord," like the armourbearer of Jonathan, 1 Sam. xiv. 13. Only cry continually to him for strength: "He is the mighty One, on whom help is laid," Psalm lxxxix. 19, and "hide

yourselves with him," like David, Psalm cxliii. 9, "that he may deliver you from your enemy." When we do this, we "strengthen ourselves in the Lord our God," like that valiant king of Israel, 1 Sam. xxx. 6, and we "become strong in the "Lord, and in the power of his might," Eph. vi 10.

9. As ye pray to your Father for all things, so it behooves you to glorify and thank him in all things: "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you," saith Paul, 1 Thess. v. 18. Yea, we ought to pray, that we may praise him, and we ought to engage in our praying to praise him, and thus to make use of our engagement to glorify him, as a motive to urge our prayer the more powerfully. In this manner did the church conclude her prayer for deliverance from her enemies, when she said, Psalm lxxix. 13. "So we thy people, and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations."

10. Trust also, when ye say Amen, that the Father will grant your petitions in his own time, and in his own way. It is his will, that we should think well of him, and trust in him. It is unjust to mistrust our gracious Father, and to suspect him of sparingness and austerity. He requires that we should "ask all things in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed: for let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord," James i. 6, 7. His Son hath indeed purchased all things for you, and hath promised you all things in the covenant of grace, especially that your prayers shall be heard, and "all the promises of God are in him yea, and in him Amen," 2 Cor. i. 20. And thus we conclude all the truths which we have explained in the foregoing discourses, and all our prayers with the words of David from Psalm lxxii. 18, 19. "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who only doth wonderous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory: Amen, and Amen."

FINIS.

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OF THE

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SCRIPTURE,

ILLUSTRATED, VINDICATED AND EXPOUNDED IN THIS WORK.

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Page 30, line 2 from the bottom, insert *or* before *because*.
P. 68, 11 from the top, read *this* instead of *their*.
P. 81, 7 from the top, read *suck* instead of *seek*.
P. 117, 4 from the top, read *exceedingly* instead of *accordingly*.
P. 164, 6 from the top, read *as* instead of *at*.
P. 335, 13 from the bottom, read *his* instead of *their*.
P. 380, 4 from the bottom, read *hands* instead of *heads*.
P. 488, 6 from the top, read *after* instead of *of* before the flesh.
P. 503, 10 from the bottom, insert *which* before *without*.
P. 508, 4 from the top, read *prosperity* instead of *property*.

VOL. II.

P. 25, line 18 from the top, read *or* instead of *as*.
P. 102, 12 from the top, read *their* instead of *his*.
P. 204, 14 from the bottom, insert a *reference* after *face*.
P. 255, 7 from the bottom, read *Gen. xliii.* 15 instead of 1 *Cor. xv.* 31
P. 267, 8 from the top, read *it* after *sanctify*.
P 281, 4 from the bottom, read *suffer* instead of *seek for*.
P. 348, 2 from the bottom read *usury* instead of *money*.
P. 464, 20 from the top, read *fervently* instead of frequently,
P. 516, 13 from the bottom insert *great* before *transgression*.